FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

HENRY W. FANCHER

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A Sermon-Sequence on John's First Epistle

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To
Ulmer Crumpton Fancher
MY WIFE
Since October 8, 1916

INTRODUCTION

HE who goes into the treasure-house of truth and brings forth treasures, new and old, is doing a real service for his fellow man. It costs much in time and labour, as well as in spiritual insight, to do this, but it pays. Pastor Henry W. Fancher has done this in a series of sermonic expositions given to his own people in the course of a busy pastorate, on the first two chapters of the first Epistle of John.

The hearty reception given to these expositions led him to consider giving them a wider circulation, by putting them in permanent form, in a small volume, under the title, " Fellowship with God." He takes this sentence as his keyword and unlocks the doors of this temple of truth. Fellowship between the Father and child is the basis of all phases of fellowship taught in the Epistle.

John's message does not always yield its meaning as one approaches it, but our author goes beyond the threshold into the inner courts of this treasure house of sacred lore and seeks to view the truth from John's viewpoint. His exegesis is so sane and reasonable as to commend his interpretations to sober judgment and common sense. They are free from fantastic word juggling and furnish

real nourishment to all who seek to know John's meaning as he penned these great truths. I have a feeling that our author has not gone far afield on this wonderful first century message from the beloved John. Of one thing we may be assured—he has something of John's certitude that Jesus was God manifested in the flesh. He takes the thunderbolt which John hurled at the errors of that early day and shows their effectiveness as weapons against the errors of our own day, which are in essence the same as those which John encountered. We may call them modernism, agnosticism, antisupernaturalism, or what not, but they are all one in seeking to destroy faith in the Diety of Christ.

Mr. Fancher has a happy knack of alliteration and a gift of apt illustration which hold the attention while he deals with abstractions, which to the average mind would be dull and tiresome. He so simplifies his expositions that any honest inquirer after truth need not fail to understand his meaning. He follows John's method of antithetic statement in his analysis and exposition. It is light vs. darkness; truth vs. falsehood; good vs. evil; joy vs. sorrow; safety vs. peril; life vs. death. In doing this he is in company with such eminent expositors as Westcott to whom he acknowledges his indebtedness. He shows his good judgment by consulting such scholars.

As a busy pastor, Mr. Fancher has set his

brother preachers an example in expository preaching. The preaching of the day is too often characterized by dissertations on the latest story book, some outstanding current event, some work of art, or some fad in sociology or psychology, when the preacher ought to be drawing deep draughts from the well of inspired truth. Expository preaching, if based on earnest, faithful and prayerful study of the Word will always find a hearing. Thousands of earnest souls are ready to learn something about "The Book That Nobody Knows," if they can find a teacher who is willing to pay the price of learning it himself.

In the chapter on "The Divinity of Christ" appended to this sermonic series we have a thesis written by Mr. Fancher as a student doing some postgraduate work in Harvard University nearly a quarter of a century ago. It sets forth the keen logic of the young student which was a prophecy of the cogent reasoning of maturer years as set forth in his expositions. The thesis is quite convincing as to the Deity of Christ.

W. F. YARBOROUGH.

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THE first Epistle of John was written, most probably, at the close of the first century. Circumstances of the Christian society point to that period. Since John spent the latter years of his life at Ephesus, the place of writing was very likely there. The specific forms of false teaching dealt with point to that time and place. Cerinthus, the exponent of the false doctrine specially at issue, taught in Asia Minor about A. D. 100, and is placed by tradition in immediate connection with John.

If we would fully understand and appreciate this wonderfully profound and simple booklet of the beloved disciple, we must keep in mind the divergent lines of theological thought of those early days. The main questions of debate are gathered around the person and work of our Lord. On the one hand He was represented as a mere man, by Ebionism; on the other, He was represented as a mere phantom, by Docetism; a third party endeavoured to combine these two opinions, and supposed that the divine element, Christ, was united with the man, Jesus, at His baptism and left Him before His passion. This school of thought was headed by Cerinthus, and hence the doctrine it taught is called Cerinthianism.

John uses a two-fold teaching method in this treatise. He states his convictions in a positive and in a negative way; he contrasts the true with the false. He tells us what is truth, and what is not truth; who is a Christian, and who is not a Christian; who Christ is, and who Christ is *not*. A straight line is drawn from the beginning to the end of his message, and with it he separates the good from the bad, the children of God from the children of the Evil One.

I know of no book that ought to be studied and taught by our age more than this, the last message of inspiration. In the following pages we have endeavoured to succinctly set down in germ-form the false doctrines of all times relative to the work and person of Jesus Christ and a courageous and uncompromising refutation of these fallacies. What is commonly called Modernism, to-day, is only the tenets of the enemies of the God-man in modern phraseology; Modernism, as a matter of fact, is *ancient,* not modern. The first Epistle of John contains the most drastic message ever spoken against scepticism, ancient or modern, under the guise of the Christian religion. The certain, godless fate of the deceitful foes of the Christ is sharply and boldly contrasted to the joyful and abiding fellowship of the saints of all ages.

H. W. F.

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I

THE INTRODUCTION

1 John 1: 1–4.

1. The Person Manifested.

"That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life" (v. 1).

Since the theological battles of John's day were waged largely around the person and work of our Lord, it was very natural and logical that his opening sentence would be this: "That which was from the beginning." He uses the neuter pronoun "that which" and not the masculine "who" because he is thinking primarily of the manifestation of the person rather than the person himself. He did not say "in the beginning," a certain definite, limited point of time in an unmeasured past, as in his Gospel, but "from the beginning," indicating a long, continuous, and unbroken series of acts which culminated in the revelation of the Word. There he uses simply "the Word"; here nothing will suffice but "the Word of life." This Word of life is God's whole message of life to man, the

Word which tells of life, or, which results in life. Both views are true. Ultimately, it means the Christ, who is life, manifested or revealed in word.

The different verbs and the various tenses in which we find them mark the progress of the revelation of this person. "Was" points to an unknown historic past. "Have heard" has reference, not merely to the preaching of Jesus, but to the testimonies of the patriarchs, of the law-giver, and of the prophets as well. "Seen" doubtless goes beyond a vision of the person and includes the civil and religious institutions by which John was surrounded. "Handled" makes clear reference to the risen Lord, while "beheld and handled," united by one relative, may be offered as good ground, and in ascending order, of the author's belief in the real humanity of Jesus. He begins with eternity, and therefore with divinity, and closes his opening sentence with His humanity.

Some time ago a gentleman met a little boy on his way home from Sunday school. "Do you go to Sunday school, young man?" he asked. "Yes," answered the boy. "What did your teacher talk about last Sunday?" "Oh, about Jacob." "And what did he talk about the Sunday before?" "About prayer." "Well, didn't your teacher talk about Jesus?" "Oh, no," said the little fellow. "He's at the other end of the book." Now, evidently, John did not believe that Jesus was at the other end of the book, but that He was all

through God's Book; that every chapter and verse and incident have some bearing upon the manifestation of His unique character; that every work and word of God throughout the countless years gone by, was a determined effort of the Deity to unfold the marvelous richness and beauty of the indescribable gift of God to man.

2. The Proof Submitted.

> "*And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us*" (v. 2).

The whole second verse is in parenthesis. It shows that the writer goes back to get something in the first verse to explain more fully, or to give added emphasis to it. Here it becomes a second point in the introduction of his letter. The expression, "The Word of life," causes him to reflect, and he interprets that saying as the "manifestation of life." The whole revelation of life, which extends through all times, leads him to rest upon the supreme fact up to which, and from which, all revelation comes. He means to say by the use of that word or phrase, the revelation of our Lord at His first coming, when the Word became flesh. What he has to declare is not a word merely, it is a fact, a historic, palpable fact.

Following this opening and interpreting phrase,

he submits personal and human evidences as proof of his contention, namely, that the eternal life which was with the Father in the beginning was manifested, or that the eternal Word took upon itself clothes of flesh and dwelt among men. Make note of these words: "Have seen," "bear witness," "declare," "manifested to us." John has mentioned these personal and human evidences in the foregoing verse, but there he was emphasizing the person or personality which was in process of revelation through all time, and which culminated in the full manifestation of that person when Christ took upon Himself the form of man. Here, the emphasis is upon these human evidences. John saw with his own eyes, he handled with his own hands, he heard with his own ears. Along with the rest of the Apostles, he had every earmark of a legal witness. This was the one insistent qualification of an apostle. If we overthrow the testimony of John and his apostolic colleagues, with their clear claim as eye-witnesses, we destroy the one foundation upon which accumulative knowledge rests. Mark the voluntary and responsible affirmation of the writer in the words, "bear witness." This is natural to the person who possesses personal evidence. A man with the sincerity, honesty, and nobility of character of John, would not "bear witness" so positively and unmistakably on so important a fact, if he had not possessed evidence sufficient to convince his own mind

and soul beyond all doubt. The preacher does not stop here: he adds, "We declare unto you." This has the ring of an authoritative announcement, and may include the whole apostolic ministry. Certainly this puts the question of the manifestation of the eternal life—the Word made flesh—to the physical senses of the twelve Apostles beyond all cavil. Regardless of what others may think, or how they may feel, we must admit that these personal and human evidences which the Apostles had gained, were enough to fully convince and satisfy the pillars of early Christianity.

In this connection, one is reminded of a manufacturer who took his little daughter to his factory for the first time. The child, terrified by the deafening roar of the machinery all around her, clung sobbingly to her father. "What are you afraid of?" he asked. "Don't you know I am master here? Look!" and he lifted his finger. In a moment every wheel was still, every sound hushed. When the disciples of Jesus saw His mastery over the wind and the waves, over various diseases and even death, over sin and Satan, they recognized that He was more than man, that He was One sent from God.

But the disciples were eye-witnesses also of things that had transpired on this side the grave. They had witnessed an empty tomb, the grave-clothes, the napkin carefully laid aside by itself. The word "beheld and handled" suggests some-

thing more. The Apostles possessed personal evidence of their risen Lord. They had seen, heard, touched, and conversed with the victor of the grave.

A little girl, born blind, received her sight by means of a successful operation. When permitted to go out of doors, she was particularly interested in the sun. But when the sun set and darkness covered the earth, her tears fell fast. She thought the light had gone out of her life forever. But the returning morning brought smiles and gladness to her again. Similarly the resurrection of Jesus brought light and joy to the sorrowing and doubting disciples, and furnished them with sufficient, convincing final testimony in proof of the fact that the Man Jesus was the Christ of the Old Testament, and God manifest in the flesh.

3. The Purpose Assigned.

> *"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write that our joy may be made full"* (v. 3).

Repeating for emphasis the evidences gained by the Apostles through their physical senses, John goes on to assign his purpose or object in writing this book. He states that the one high aim for

which he is now writing is "in order that" his readers might have spiritual fellowship. He claims that if one will appropriate the full apostolic knowledge concerning the eternal life manifested in the flesh, that eternal life will thereby be imparted to them. This spiritual life will be the basis of a spiritual fellowship. But John is expecting his message to be productive of a two-fold fellowship, a divine and a human, fellowship with Christ, and fellowship with the brethren, fellowship with Christ in the brethren, and fellowship with the brethren in Christ. We only have fellowship with the brethren because we have fellowship with Christ; but since we have fellowship with Christ we have fellowship with the brethren. But Christ has fellowship with God, and we have fellowship with God in Christ. We have fellowship with God through Christ, for it is by virtue of what He has done for us that we have access to God, and it is through the eternal life which He has imparted to us that we can enjoy fellowship with God. What higher aim could be given than this for writing any book? We are now considering the richest and most precious contribution or blessing of Christianity to humanity. What other accomplishment or attainment could be compared to this?

A happy Christian met an Irish peddler one day, and exclaimed: "It's a grand thing to be saved." "Yea," answered the peddler, "it is; but I know

something better than that." "Better than being saved?" returned the first man. "What can you possibly know that is better than that?" "The companionship of the Man who saved me," was the unexpected reply.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux has sung beautifully of this rare Christian experience in the following lines:

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast:
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest."

John adds a closing word regarding the resultant glory of this two-fold spiritual communion, which is spiritual joy fulfilled, or filled full. The fulfillment of Christian joy depends upon, and is the mellow fruit of Christian fellowship. It is when we have experienced the fulfillment of this Christian joy that our souls reëcho the song of Helen Goreh:

"In the secret of His presence how my soul delights to hide!
Oh, how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus' side.
Earthly cares can never vex me, neither trials lay me low;
For when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go."

II

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AS LIGHT

1 John 1: 5–2: 29.

TO the casual reader there seems to be a great break between the two preceding verses, where the author has given the purpose of writing this book, and the fifth verse, where he makes his announcement concerning the character of God. We feel disposed to ask what connection there is between "fellowship with God," the high and worthy aim of the book, and "the message" which the preacher delivers in this verse, namely, "God is light." And yet it is common knowledge to all of us that we must know a person before we can have real fellowship with him. Knowledge is the door by which we must enter to have communion with man or God. Since this is so, John begins to introduce his hearers to the Divine Person with whom he would have us enjoy spiritual communion and to the full, until it ripens into Christian joy. He purposes to tell us who and what God is under three aspects, or figures of speech, and he pictures God, first, as light. The Psalmist declares that God is clothed "with light as with a garment"; Daniel says that "the light

dwelleth in Him"; James affirms that God is "the Father of light"; but John proclaims that "God is light."

> *"And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"* (v. 5).

The question arises, what does the expression, "God is light," signify? We notice that God is not declared to be "*a* light," one out of many, through whom and from whom illumination comes. He is not spoken of as "the light," in His relation to created things. John simply says, "God is light." The statement has reference only to the nature of God; we are here given a true, revealed conception of His being.

Bishop Westcott suggests that, in the physical world, light embodies the idea of splendour, glory; in the intellectual world, the idea of truth; in the moral or spiritual world, the idea of holiness. It would seem, however, that the word, as used here, embodies all three of these ideas and still falls short of the conception of John. Dr. James Petigru Boyce is probably correct in his interpretation of God, when he contends that although holiness is usually classed among His attributes, strictly speaking, it is not a distinct attribute at all, but rather the combination of all moral attributes of Deity.

May we notice, also, the source of the message John has to deliver? " From Him " suggests the ultimate or primary source of this deliverance, though not necessarily the immediate source. The message which the Apostle announces had been heard not only from the lips of Christ, but, in reality, from all those in whom and through whom He had spoken in earlier times. But Christ was the real source even where He was not the speaker. " From Him " refers back to the expression " was manifested to us." God, as light, has been shining through the heart, minds and lives of men throughout their checkered history, until He exhibited the fullest, though veiled, expression of His resplendent glory when Christ cloaked the Divinity with humanity. As we saw in his introduction, John claimed that he was in possession of personal first-hand information of this prolonged, complete, and sufficient revelation which the Almighty had made of Himself in the person of His Son, the Word of life, the manifestation of God.

It is a natural and fundamental quality of light to diffuse itself, to be self-communicating; likewise, it is the essential nature of God to reveal, to manifest, to unbosom Himself. God imparts Himself, and man was made to receive Him; and, in spite of his sin, he *can* receive Him. Through self-communication also God gave to John additional first-hand information as to His nature.

But John has a negative statement to give to

" the message " he has to announce. He adds, " Darkness there is not in Him, no, not in any way." Darkness is the very opposite of light; it is the absence of light. Darkness is the only limit to light. The negative expression gives added emphasis to the positive. Westcott lists truth, good, joy, safety, life, under the category of light, and classifies falsehood, evil, sorrow, peril and death, under the category of darkness. These elements or characteristics are direct opposites. John means to say that God, viewed as light, embodies truth, good, joy, safety, life; but on the contrary, not one particle of the elements of darkness, namely, falsehood, evil, sorrow, peril, death, are in Him, " no, not in any way."

I

The Character of Those Who May Enjoy Fellowship with God as Light (1: 6–2: 2).

Having told us who God is, or pictured to us as much of the personality of God as he could under the figure of light, he turns now to outline the character of the people who are privileged to enjoy fellowship with God as light. He has three things to say about this favoured people.

1. The Character Prescribed (1: 6, 7).

John states his point in a negative and in a positive way. He not only tells us of those who may enjoy this " closer walk with God," but he as well

candidly designates those who bar themselves from this coveted privilege and gives the reason why.

> a. The negative expression: "*If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and we do not the truth*" (1: 6).

He speaks first of the class of people who cannot enjoy fellowship with God, who, in the very elements of His being, is Light. Those who deny the reality of sin, or who ignore the fact of sin, are held up in contrast to those characters who are worthy of communion with the Holy Light. Note the word "say." John does not say "if we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness," but rather "if we say we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness." It is the difference between "saying," and "doing or being."

Regarding this supposed class of believers the writer makes two derogatory remarks: First: positively, they are declared to be false in word. "We lie." We are false to our own knowledge. John claimed that people who say they are Christians, or enjoy fellowship with God, but who at the same time are walking in darkness venture to affirm as truth what they know to be false. It is a case of evil works over against pious words. Second: negatively, they are declared to be false in works. "We do not the truth." We do not practice the truth which we recognize as the principle of our

Christian lives, or which should be the principle of our Christian lives.

> b. The positive expression: *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1: 7).

"But": Over against this pretense, false and untrue, the Apostle states or describes the only character that can enjoy fellowship with God as Light. This communicant must walk in the light, as God, with whom he would enjoy fellowship, is in the light. Light must be the sphere of action. To state it in other words, the one that would enjoy fellowship with God as light must walk in truth, good, joy, safety, life, for these are the elements of light. Spiritual fellowship does not exist save in the realm of spiritual light.

Walking in the light issues in two results in our relation to men and God; it is rewarded with a two-fold spiritual blessing.

First: Spiritual communication. As to our fellow-believers we will have fellowship one with another. But in his statement as to the purpose of his book John gives a two-fold direction to spiritual fellowship; a human and a divine. It may be that here he takes for granted that we understand that the one follows or includes the other as a matter of course. We cannot enjoy one and not

the other. Moving in the light as God is in the light, we not only enjoy fellowship with those who move in that same light-sphere, but we also enjoy fellowship with Him who is the light of that sphere.

Second: Spiritual sanctification. In the preceding verse the Apostle has been talking about a supposed group of believers who claim fellowship with God, while in reality, they move about in a sphere of darkness. John does not want to be misunderstood. He is keenly aware of man's proclivity to sin. He knows full well the truthfulness of the fact that the poet so beautifully expresses in these lines:

> *"And none, O Lord, have perfect rest,*
> *For none are wholly free from sin;*
> *And they who fain would serve Thee best,*
> *Are conscious most of wrong within."*

And so John adds a word of hope and comfort to the true child of God, when his walk is not consistent with the light divine in which he is supposed to live. He points to the purging, purifying, cleansing blood of Jesus. Since the case taken is that of those who are members of the body of Christ, the Apostle does not speak here of the question of justification, but rather of the question of sanctification. It is by the washing of the blood that the soul is regenerated and justified, but John has reference here to that present and continuous activity

of the virtue of the slain Lamb, by which the believer is sanctified, kept constantly and continuously cleansed.

Bishop Westcott suggests that the line of argument seems to be as follows: Walking in the light, as God is in the light, produces a vision of the holiness of God; the vision of the holiness of God brings a consciousness of sin; this consciousness of sin calls out an application of the virtue of Christ's life given for and to us.

The writer of the Epistles describes the end and consummation of the work of Christ in the light of the believer, toward which the believer is ever moving. We do not find, however, any promise held out that this glad end is reached in this life.

Then, and now, the followers of Christ—the Light of life—need to be encouraged and urged to conform to this life-pattern herein described. May this be the earnest prayer and determined purpose of each one of us. May we listen to and heed the earnest appeal of Bernard Barton, in the song just sung:

"Walk in the light! so shalt thou know
That fellowship of love,
His Spirit only can bestow
Who reigns in light above.

"Walk in the light! so shalt thou find
Thy heart made truly His
Who dwells in cloudless light enshrined,
In whom no darkness is."

2. The Character Procured (1: 8, 9).

We have in these verses a statement as to how this character was or is to be procured. Here again the writer makes a two-fold statement, and presents what he has to say, in a negative and in a positive way.

> a. The negative expression: *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us"* (1: 8).

The mention of sin at the end of v. 7, leads to a new thought and a new plea. In view of what has been said one might ask, "How has the Christian anything more to do with sin? How does sin still continue?" Some who do not venture to affirm that they have reached the sinless state, that they are free from committing sin, may yet maintain that sin does not cleave to him who has committed it, and that man is not really and truly responsible for his wrong-doing. This is the second false claim, and its advocates express their contention in these words: "We have no sin." By this they mean to say that sin is only a transient phenomenon, which leaves no abiding issues. They preach that it is only an accident, and not a principle in their lives.

This denial of the responsibility of sin results in two bad, detrimental effects upon the characters and lives of its adherents. These, also, are presented in a positive and in a negative way. First:

positively, John says, " We lead ourselves astray." Our fatal error and our misconduct is the fruit of our own efforts. We teach and preach that which we know is untrue, and we persuade ourselves into believing our false doctrine. Second: negatively, he says, by advocating this false plea, we show that " The truth is not in us." By truth the writer seems always to mean the whole Gospel. False teachers by their false teaching demonstrate that the Gospel has not become in them an informing, inspiring, saving power.

> b. The positive expression: *" If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness "* (1: 9).

How then, it may be asked, can these consequences be done away? How can we escape the guilt and responsibility of sin? If sin is something that clings to us, something that leaves the prints of its soiled fingers upon our souls, how can this pollution be effaced? John answers that open confession is met with free forgiveness. By confession he means that we not only acknowledge our sins, but that we announce this publicly, before men. Nothing short of this is confession. Openness is an essential element of confession.

The blessing which the Lord extends to those who make this open confession of their sins is two-fold. (1) He says that this blessing includes

the remission or forgiveness of our sins, the blotting out of the evil consequences of our sins. (2) He suggests that it also embraces a purification, a cleansing of the sinner from all moral or spiritual imperfection, "unrighteousness," which naturally separates him from God, with whom he is supposed to have fellowship.

Before passing from a consideration of this verse, take notice of the encouraging introductory remarks the writer makes. "He [God] is faithful and righteous." By "faithful" we understand John to mean that the Almighty is not, as men are, fickle and arbitrary. Peter declares that God is not slack concerning His promises as some men count slackness. God is essentially faithful and true, He is bound by His word and promise. By "righteous" we understand that God recognizes and renders that which is another's due.

This then is the character procured by the divine remission of sins and the purification from all spiritual imperfections. If we comply with the aforesaid condition, namely, an open confession of our sins, we may confidently rely upon the free and abundant blessing of God, for He is true to His promise, and deals fairly and justly with all.

The trusted agent of a large firm had, in a time of unusual expense, run past his allowance, and had taken company funds for a wrong use. He became distressed for fear he would be discovered and regarded as a criminal. Thinking to gain ad-

vice, he disclosed his trouble to a fellow-agent, who responded, "Oh, don't worry, I can cover that up for you." "But you are not the man to cover it up," replied the man in trouble, and he went straight to the head of the firm and explained everything to him. "You've made a serious mistake," said the head man, "but I'll cover the discrepancy for you this time," and he wrote a check for the amount. "Oh, if you cover it, I am all right," said the man relieved. God is the one who promises to cover our sins, the one against whom we have sinned, and by covered I mean to say that He remits our sins and washes away all spiritual imperfections which separate us from Him.

3. The Character Preserved (1 John 1: 10–2: 2).

We come now to the third and last point the writer makes in his statement regarding the character we must have if we would have fellowship with God. He has given us a compact and complete description of this prescribed character; he has briefly, but fully outlined the means and method by which this character has been or may be procured; we are now to hear what he has to say regarding the way this character is to be preserved. As in the two preceding statements, so here also, we have a two-fold expression of his thought, a negative and a positive. He not only tells us how the Christian character is to be pre-

served, but describes also those who exclude themselves from the perennial fountain.

> a. The negative expression: *"If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us"* (v. 10).

In his negative expression John holds up for our review the world's denial of its identity with sin. We are to contrast this with the inestimable cost of the salvation of the sinner and the exercise of the divine energy that is being spent to keep him saved. The third false claim is stated in these words: "We have not sinned." To express the idea in every-day speech we would say, "We have never committed sin." This description is of the life as a whole. Denial of identity with sin was probably suggested by the words "our sins" above.

The evil, derogatory consequences of this false claim are set forth in a positive and a negative way, following the form of his refutations of the first and second false pleas. In making this assertion of sinlessness he says: First: positively, we affirm that God deals falsely with us, "We make him a liar"; Second: negatively, we show that the word of God does not indwell us and become the spring and principle of our lives. In the two cases cited above John has sought to produce conviction on the part of the advocates of these false claims in the realm of their own consciences, but here he appeals to the voice of God. Man must

not only settle accounts with the monitor within, but as well with his Maker above.

> b. The positive expression: "*My little children, these things I write to you that ye may not sin. And if any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and himself is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world*" (2: 1, 2).

In meeting the third false claim John does not use the form used in verses seven and nine, but resorts to one that is more direct and personal. The thought of sin in the life of the individual calls forth an expression of the utmost tenderness from John as he thinks of his relation to his hearers as their spiritual father. The former statement of John by which we are assured of forgiveness of sin and a cleansing from all moral imperfection, might lead some to underrate the results of sin, the guilt of sin, and so he adds an explanatory remark. "Don't get the wrong idea, my hearers," says John. "The object of my words on perfect redemption and ultimate sanctification is not to be taken as an excuse or incentive for sin. Surely we will not sin because grace abounds."

But, going back to his original line of thought, the writer says, "If any one does sin, he has an advocate with God, the Father." The name used

here to describe that work of intercession in which Jesus is now engaged is that of Paraclete, one called to the side of.

You will notice that the Apostle reverses the order of the work of Christ in his statement here. He mentions first His work in heaven, His work of intercession; he follows with His work on earth, His work of redemption or propitiation. He does this, as I understand, because his primary object is to set forth the way and means by which the character of those who enjoy fellowship with God is preserved. Christ accomplished on earth a work for all, He is a universal propitiation for sin; but He is now accomplishing a work in heaven for those who are united with Him; He is the saints' mediator. Christ as advocate pleads the cause of the believer against his accuser, and He is not to be thought of as being merely in the presence of the Father, but as turned toward Him, and addressing Him with continual pleadings. John points out that Jesus is amply fitted for all of our necessities from the standpoint of person, being righteous, and from the standpoint of His work, being the divine propitiation for our sins and also for the whole world. The first is the foundation of the second, while the second is the consummation of the first. The two are inseparable. They are incomplete the one without the other. Jesus must not only save us, He must keep us saved. Useless each without the other. Jesus fulfilled in His life and work on earth

all the demands of an offended holiness and all of the commands of a divine law; and now He pleads for the fulfillment of all that is right according to these requirements, satisfied by His person and personal propitiation, and in behalf of every one who embraces the merits secured thereby. And John would also urge his hearers "to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that they might obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," and because "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

"How do you know your mother is up-stairs?" asked an uncle who was teaching his nephews and nieces their Sunday school lesson on "The Ascension." "I saw her go," answered one. "You mean you saw her start up-stairs," remarked the uncle. "Perhaps she did not get there, and she may not be there now, even if she *has* been there." "I *know* she is there," said the youngest child, "for I went to the foot of the steps and called her, and she answered me." Yes, the disciples said they saw the Master ascend into heaven, and they know He is living there now, and making intercession, not only because they saw Him go, but because He spake to their inner selves, in a still small voice. And, He not only spake to them, His first followers, but He speaks to all who are united with Him, and who love His appearing.

Charles Wesley believed in our Lord's heavenly intercession for the saints, and has beautifully declared himself in these words:

"I know that my Redeemer lives,
And ever prays for me;
A token of His love He gives,
A pledge of liberty.

"I find Him lifting up my head,
He brings salvation near;
His presence makes me free indeed,
And He will soon appear."

II

The Conduct of Those Who Enjoy Fellowship with God as Light (1 John 2: 3–11).

1. Their Conduct toward God (1 John 2: 3–6).

Character expresses itself in conduct. Christian character expresses itself in Christian conduct. John discusses the two-fold expression of the character of those who enjoy fellowship with God as light. He first calls attention to this conduct as it relates to God. He points out that there are two ways the Christian character can and will express itself in its relation to God.

a. Minding the Divine Law (1 John 2: 3–5a).

He first affirms that we demonstrate our saving

knowledge of God by our obedience to His commandments, or by minding the divine law.

(1) A General Statement. *"And in this we perceive that we know him, if we observe his commandments."*

In this verse John gives us a general statement of the point he is making. "In this," he begins to say, and points to what he is about to say, and not to something already stated. When he writes, "we perceive," he means to say, "we know by experience." The experience here referred to is present and immediate, confirmed from moment to moment in the course of one's life. By the expression "we know him," or more exactly, "have come to a knowledge of him," we understand that he means experimental knowledge. The word for "know" is also the knowledge that comes by experience, and is to be contrasted with the knowledge which is immediate and absolute. "Him" no doubt refers to the Godhead, with no reference to a distinct person. We come now to what he started out to say, namely, "if we observe his commandments." The word translated "observe" signifies a "watchful heed," such as one would give to an object that claims, so to speak, a living observance, a service that measures up not only to the letter, but to the spirit as well.

In this verse John means to say that we have saving knowledge, that we know personally that we

know Him experimentally, if we observe His commandments. He maintains that those who enjoy fellowship with God as light give ample proof of their fit and worthy character by their conduct toward God as their lives relate to His commandments. The commandments of God are definite instruction and are vital to the Christian character. These include any and all of the orders of the Supreme Being that have any bearing upon our conduct relative to our own lives, or relative to our fellow men, or relative to God Himself.

We have personal assurance of our spiritual experience with God in so far as we give watchful heed to these spiritual mandates. According to John the Christian religion is personal, experimental, and self-assuring. He insists that the inward condition can only be evidenced by a conformity to fixed, stated rules of decorum. To know God as God is to be in vital fellowship with Him, and this fellowship includes a love for Him, such a love as supplies a disposition to fulfill that relation toward Him for which we were born, and this manifests itself in strict heed to His fixed rules of right. Vital relationship here includes obedience to the divine law.

Travelers among the Alps tell us that they come to have a peculiar feeling, unlike any other, for their Alpine guide,—not a feeling of companionship, fellowship, or friendship alone, but a combination of all these. This feeling, they say, is

produced by their obedience to the guide's command, and the men who have guided them through the Alps always seem to them different from other men.

Once our guide said, "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love,"—that is, in Him. Simple obedience, then, will produce in us a feeling of confidence in Jesus Christ that all the religious zeal and fervour in the world could not produce without obedience. It produces spiritual fellowship. Obedience is the key that unlocks the door into the dwelling of the indwelling Christ. The Apostle in his statement here is looking at the proposition from another angle and holds that we are in addition assured of our companionship, fellowship and friendship with God by virtue of the fact that we conform our lives to His expressed will and wish. We demonstrate our discipleship by doing the divine doctrine.

> (2) A Particular Statement. *"He that saith I know him and observeth not his commandments, is a liar, and in this man the truth is not; but whosoever observeth his Word, verily in this man the love of God hath been perfected"* (2: 4, 5).

In verse 4 and the first half of verse 5 the writer furnishes us with a two-fold particular statement, a negative and a positive.

(a) A negative expression.

He says first that if a man claims that he has come to know, has learned to know God through experience, and still does not give watchful heed to God's definite instruction or commandments, that this one is a liar and that in him the truth is not. By liar we understand that the whole character of the man is false, that the very personality is deceit, that the man is deceit personified. By the other expression, we understand that the Gospel, which is the truth, does not abide in this man as a living, ruling, controlling principle, as the spring and source of his life. This is the negative expression of this statement with particular or individual direction.

In the early days of modern missions, so the story goes, two young men were discussing the "foolishness of wasting money and throwing away life in mission work." They appealed to an old field marshal of England and said: "Don't you think it is a foolish thing for men and women to expose themselves to disease and death in an effort to change the religion of foreign peoples? And don't you think it is wrong to give money for their encouragement and support?" The old marshal, who knew nothing for a soldier but unequivocal obedience, said, "Are you not soldiers under the command of Christ? Well, what are His marching orders?"

Every one knows that the marching orders of

Christ are these: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." That settles the matter for a true, genuine, worthy soldier. Disobedience to these orders on the part of a Christian, from the standpoint of the field marshal, proves conclusively that he is unworthy of being called a soldier of Jesus Christ. According to John it proves also the fallacy of his claim and the hypocrisy of his character.

(b) A positive expression.

Dr. James Moffatt translates the first half of verse five thus: "But whosoever obeys his word in him love to God is really complete." The word translated "observe" is the same as used above and signifies watchful heed. But the object of observe is not "His commandments," as above, but "His word." There is this difference in the two expressions: Commandments are definite, fixed, expressed instruction, while word would seem to indicate not only the specific commands but, the spirit of His will as expressed and implied in His Word. The latter is the more comprehensive term and leaves room for individual and future instruction. As an illustration of the difference between these two terms, compare 1 John 3: 22, where John says, "We observe his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight." The true child of God does not try to get by by merely observing the stated, fixed rules of right, but, in addition

thereto, he tries to keep every word of his master, to do everything that is well pleasing in His sight. John does not hold up such a high standard for the lip-server, for the man that merely says he knows God. This one is only reminded that he does not even keep the fixed, expressed will of God.

Notice now what John has to say about what will result because of this overplus of service or obedience on the part of the child of God. The reward for this extraordinary service will be the perfection of the divine love in his life. Bishop Westcott understands John to say, "the love of God," while Dr. Moffatt makes him say "love to God." Doubtless both are correct. When I say "Yes" to the call of the Spirit, God sheds abroad His love in my heart, and this love of God in me answers back in love to God. The man that gives watchful heed not only to the definite instructions of God but also to any additional requests God may make of him, in this man the love of God and his love for God will continue to grow until it is full grown, complete, perfect, unalloyed.

In the days of Malachi when the people of Israel robbed Jehovah of tithes they had failed to observe His commandments; when they robbed Him of tithes and offerings they failed to give watchful heed to His word. Offerings then and now are the overplus of service, the service one is glad to render who has a disposition to obey every word of his master.

The heroic lighthouse keeper determined, when the machinery broke down, to work the light and keep it revolving by hand. For twelve long hours every night he sat there in his turret, with his watch beside him, and turned the light at the right moment. Vessels away out at sea saw the flashes at the proper intervals, and went safely on their course. It was nearly a year before the Government vessel came to the dreary spot with new supplies. During all that time there was sickness in the keeper's family. His children lay ill unto death, and all day long he watched and nursed them; then, as night fell on the rockbound coast, he hastened to his place in the turret to turn the light by hand. This keeper was doing something more than observing the definite instructions of his country. He was complying with its unexpressed will and wish.

Down the centuries there has come to us a legend of John the Apostle which says that when he was a feeble old man, too weak to walk to the assemblies of the church, he was borne there by his disciples; and addressing people as he spread abroad his hands, repeated again and again, " Love one another." When asked why he said ever the same thing, he replied, " Because there is nothing else; attain that, and you have enough." John lived to a ripe old age and ripened into a very beautiful, and Christlike character. He presents to the world a life strikingly perfected in love, ac-

complished because of his constant, watchful observance of every word of his Saviour and Lord.

b. Modeling the Divine Life (1 John 2: 5b, 6).

We come now to the second kind of conduct in which the Christian character expresses itself in its relation to God. Some may be content with their efforts to obey the laws of God, but John entertained higher aims for his hearers.

(1) The Claim. "*In this we perceive that we are in him; he that saith he abideth in him.*"

In the preceding verses John pointed out the attitude of the true Christian in reference to the divine law. He maintained that he would mind the law. In this short section he calls attention to the attitude of the genuine Christian in reference to the divine life.

As above, so here, the writer begins with the expression, "In this." As above, so here, the word points to what is about to be said, not to something that has been said. The word for "perceive" is the same as used in the foregoing section and means to know personally and by experience. Before the Apostle affirmed that the Christian knows personally that he has come to know God through experience of grace; here he contends that he knows that he lives and abides in God. The idea finds an apt illustration in the expression

in Acts 17: 28, where, speaking of man's natural union with God, Paul says, " For in him we live, and move, and have our being." The idea of our spiritual union with God is prominent in all of John's writings though under several different aspects. The fellowship of believers with God is realized in and through Jesus Christ. He is the basis of the unity and foundation of our spiritual being and the ground and medium of our spiritual communion with the Father.

I know of no illustration that so simply and so perfectly sets forth the vital relationship existing between Christ and the believer and in turn between the believer and God than that which is given us by the Master in the 15th chapter of John. It is the story of the vine and the branches. He says, " I am the vine, ye are the branches." Now there is a great similarity existing between the vine and the branches. This is true internally as well as externally. The vine and the branches are similar in nature and substance. Take a small section from the vine and a small section from the branch and carry them to the scientist and he will tell you if they belong to the same plant family. This same similarity is to be seen between the Christ and the Christian. The heathen poet spoke a far greater truth than he was aware of when he said, " We are also his offspring." In our spiritual nature, acquired in the act of regeneration, we become one with Christ in the very fibre and elements

of our spiritual being. In very truth we are His children. There is not only a oneness between the vine and the branch from the standpoint of substance, but there is a oneness also from the standpoint of their subsistence. The vine drinks in food from the various storehouses of nature and passes it on into the body of the branches. In some similar way Jesus Christ is linked up with all of the depositories of spiritual food in the Godhead, and passes this spiritual sustenance to those who are united with Him by the act of the Holy Spirit.

(2) The Challenge. *"Ought himself also to walk even as he walked."*

Having thus stated the condition in which the Christian claims to stand in his relation to Jesus Christ, John passes on to remark on the conduct which this believer owes to contribute to God. The word translated "ought" here expresses a specific and personal obligation, a debt. The spiritual life which is from God and which is in God must express, is under obligation to manifest, itself after the pattern of the divine life which has been lived on the earth. By the word "walk" John gives a practical application to this profound and spiritual unity and fellowship with God. The pronoun "he" makes a direct and unquestionable reference to Christ. He stands out as the one figure in full perfection in the race of man. If any one should inquire as to how the Man of Galilee walked

while on the earth, it could be said that every picture drawn of His life in the entire New Testament was one of humble service, patient suffering, and supreme sacrifice. In a similar way every man should walk about, who makes claim of being linked up with God in and through Jesus Christ. Only by such conduct do we give evidence of our oneness with Him.

Look again at the figure of the vine and the branches. If you look at the branches of a vine, you will observe that the bark is the same as that of the vine, that the leaves are the same, that the fruit is the same. There is the closest resemblance between the branches and the vine in every way. If I brought you a cutting from an oak and said I had found it growing on a vine, you no doubt would say, "I think there is a mistake; this is from an oak, the leaves are ragged like those of an oak. We are not accustomed to see that kind of branch on a vine." And when I point you to a certain group of nominal Christians you are correct when you say that you never saw the spirit of Jesus produce such character and conduct as are witnessed in such believers. I can more easily believe that an oak limb grew upon a vine than I can bring myself to believe that some men and women I know grew out of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have the divine life in you, you will model or imitate the divine life lived by Jesus Christ on the earth.

2. Their Conduct toward Men (1 John 2: 7–11).

In these verses of Scripture the writer describes the conduct of those who enjoy fellowship with God as light in their relation to their fellow men. The obligation "to walk even as he walked" enjoined in the foregoing verse, suggests and leads up to the old and the new commandment stated in verses 7 and 8 and argued in verses 9 through 11.

a. A Historical Explanation. "*Beloved, it is no new commandment I write to you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning: The commandment, the old commandment, is the word which ye heard* (2: 7, 8).
Again, a new commandment I write to you, even that which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the light, the true light, already shineth."

In these verses the Apostle gives us a brief historical explanation of the commandment.

(1) The Difference (2: 7).

John opens with a new, endearing appellation—"beloved." Believers are one in the love of God shed abroad in their hearts and in their love to God, and they are bound together by bonds of mutual love, they are beloved one to another.

If you ask why John took time to comment upon

the difference in the age of these commandments, though similar in substance, I would suggest that it was because he sensed the human element in his audience. There were no doubt among John's readers those whose lives and memories reach back nearly, if not quite as far as the ministry of Jesus. These elderly saints would naturally be restive at the announcement of any new teaching. This is why John may have brought out the love-mandate in its ancient costume.

(2) The Experience (1 John 2: 8a).

But John says that he is preaching a new commandment. In what sense then can the old commandment of love by Moses, made a new commandment by Jesus Christ, be said to be a new commandment yet again by the beloved disciple? May not the newness of the new commandment of Jesus be explained upon the ground of experience? Dr. Moffatt makes the phrase—" even that which is true in Him and in you," to mean, " realized in Him and also in yourselves." As we come to know more and more of Christ we discover more and more in Him, we learn a new and deeper significance to the fundamental element of His being —love. We discover more and more of Jesus in us; He becomes always new and yet ever old. The old, old story of Jesus and His love should ever be ripening into the new, new story of Jesus and His love. Is not an old friend, dear to one's life,

ever becoming new because of the rich discoveries being made amid their hidden treasures? Think you that you learn all of Christ when you first believe! Think you that you fathom the length and breadth, depth and height of that unique character at first glance! May not the commandment of love, old to John and his audience from the standpoint of time, become ever new in meaning as they learn more of its blessings?

Suppose some great ship should come along aside a raft with shipwreck sailors upon it, and in the darkness of the night transfer them to the security of its deck. They know how safe they are, they know what has saved them, but what do they know compared with what they will know before the voyage ends of all the reservoir of power and the stores of supplies that are in her? Christ comes to us in the darkness, and delivers us. We know Him as our deliverer from the first moment, if we have truly grasped Him. He claims that this commandment is not a new commandment but an old one, and yet he affirms that it is a new one though an old one. If it is old, in what sense is it old? If it is new, in what sense is it new? And how can it be both old and new?

The word "old" may be taken either in an absolute or in a relative sense. A thing that existed from the beginning of time, or from the beginning of the human race, or from the days of Moses may be said to be old in an absolute sense. A thing

may be said to be old in a relative sense that was preached at the beginning of Christianity or during Christ's ministry. John wrote this booklet near the end of the first century, or two generations after the death of Jesus, and the words spoken by Jesus were relatively old in the closing days of John.

Contrary to Westcott and Alexander, I believe that the word may be taken in an absolute sense. I say this because I believe that the old and new commandment referred to here may be the old commandment which was enjoined in the Mosaic system. The laws of Moses contained a commandment of love. It is recorded in Leviticus 19: 18, which reads, " But thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus called His commandment to the disciples a new commandment. These laws are the same in some respects, and yet they are different in other respects. Both enjoin love, a love that is deep-rooted and vital. In the laws of Moses love is commanded; in the teachings of Christ love is the fulfilling of all laws. Love is embraced by the laws of Moses; in Christ love embraces all laws. The expression " from the beginning " points to the Mosaic system; " The word which ye have heard " seems to make reference to the word or new commandment of Jesus.

For all practical purposes it makes no difference whether you take the word in an absolute or in a relative sense. In the final analysis the meaning

is the same. The commandment of love in Moses' day was all that the race was qualified to obey. Jesus gave added emphasis and richer significance to this commandment because He was prepared to help the race measure up to stricter demands. But it will take much summering and wintering with Him, through many a long day and year, before we can ever have a partially adequate apprehension of all that lies in Him.

May not the new experiences and duties of the Christian life be said to be like the strokes of the spade which removed the earth on an old plot of ground to uncover the riches of earth lying hid from the eyes of men? We may have purchased this earthly treasure all at one moment, but it may take a long time to uncover and count it and store it away. Will we ever know the riches of love in Christ Jesus?

(3) The Evidence (1 John 2: 8b).

John closes this explanation with this argument —" Because the darkness is passing away and the light, the true light, already shineth." " The outward establishment of the Christian Church has given a clearer distinctness to the Christian character. It had become possible to point to that which was open to men's eyes." These historical evidences of the progress of the Christian faith were marks of the fact that new discoveries were made in Christ and in His law of love. The light,

the true light, was from the beginning, it was in the beginning, but it was here to John and his readers with new and added brilliancy and power. This true light which was from the beginning in principle was until recently eclipsed by darkness. The darkness now is in the very act of passing away, while the brilliant rays of the true light are supplanting it. The newness of the commandment of love is witnessed by the efficacy of the true light.

What John said to his hearers the preacher of this generation can say to his people. He can preach the commandment " love one another " as a new commandment, and the evidences of its newness lie in the progress of truth, in the victory of the true light over darkness. This was made very evident to me by some facts regarding the success of our mission work in China, recited by Miss Willie Kelly. When she began her work in China thirty-three years ago she found a very ignorant, benighted, enslaved people, and especially was this true of the women. We still look upon that as a very backward race, and it is, but the China of to-day is in no sense the China of a generation ago. Then they had no schools; to-day they have public schools similar to ours. Minor instruction was given to boys then, but none to girls. Then women had their feet imprisoned in small shoes of wood; to-day they are as free in the choice of their dress, or no dress, as the women of America. Wherever

the Gospel has been preached spiritual and intellectual darkness has been routed, and material advancement also has followed in the wake of light.

b. A Practical Application (1 John 2: 9–11).

The writer is not satisfied in giving only a historical explanation of the command of Love. He turns now to furnish his readers with a practical application of this injunction. He tells us in simple terms how we will conduct ourselves in reference to our Christian brother when we give watchful heed to this love-mandate. And, what will be our attitude and action toward him when the mainspring of our lives is the very opposite of love, namely, hate. Bishop Westcott says that we have here described "the issues of the command of love." John does not make a formal statement of the commandment. This was not necessary. The whole commandment is contained in one word, "the word which ye heard," the word love, or "love one another" (John 13, 34).

(1) A General Statement. *"He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in the darkness until now"* (2: 9).

In this verse John lays before us a general statement of his message. He elects to express himself negatively, or to have us consider the demerits and degeneracy of the opposite of the grace of love.

You will note that the assumed personality is not one who is affirmed to be in the light, but such a one as says he is in the realm of the spiritual light. And when he makes the charge " of hating " against this nominal Christian it is not to be taken as mere indifference. This is impossible. There is no twilight in the spiritual kingdom. There are only two conditions; darkness and light. When one is present, the other is absent. When one is enthroned, the other is dethroned. Every child of God stands in such a close, vital relation to his brother that some feeling on his part is inevitable.

The word " brother " signifies fellow Christian and not fellow man. There seems to be no case where a fellow man, as man, is called brother in the New Testament. Our so-called brotherhood of man is a misnomer. It lies entirely within the region of the imagination. I doubt if men ever become spiritual brothers except in Christ. The natural man must needs go through a spiritual scrubbing before he is qualified to become a brother, or is genuinely disposed to be a brother. The men who are born from above are the only ones who can be brothers. A man may be a Baptist of long standing and not be a brother. The Pharisees were religionists, but they were far from being followers of Christ. John concludes his statement by declaring the real condition of this man. He says this one is in spiritual darkness, the very opposite of spiritual light, and right up to now.

This man is described as being continuously in the same condition he has always been in and up to the time John spoke.

(2) A Particular Statement (1 John 2: 10, 11).

In verses 10 and 11 we have a particular statement of the application of the commandment of love.

> (a) The life of love. *"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there in none occasion of stumbling in him"* (2: 10).

In verse 10 we have the positive expression of this statement, a description of the life of love. We notice here that the reality of the fact of love is set over against an idle assertion, in verse 9. One is impressed also with the strong term that is used here, the strongest word for love in the Greek tongue. This love is deep-rooted, stable, full of good will, and gives evidences of the same. This same term is used for the emotion of God in planning and providing salvation for lost sinners, or the compassion that led Jesus to the cross. It is such a love as that which Tennyson sings about, when he says,

"Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

It is this kind of love that one "born again" is to have for another "born again," regardless of where he may dwell, and these know one another by the evidences of their lives. This love is not forced, it is a natural and spontaneous flow of a genuine emotion in response to another like emotion.

Dr. Thomas Guthrie was walking along the streets of Edinburgh, when he overtook a little girl carrying a child much too heavy for her. In a very gentle way Dr. Guthrie said, "My child, the baby is too heavy for you, isn't he?" With smiling face, she made quick response, "No, sir, he's my brother." It makes a difference that the one for whom I must toil and wait, whose burdens I must bear, is one in whom the Christ abides and to whom I am united with the chords of divine love. The bitterness which a member of one church or denomination may have for a member of another church or denomination is the fruit of the carnal man, it is not the attribute of the child of God. People that are born again may differ in their thinking, but they will not differ in their feeling. This is strikingly illustrated in the case of John Wesley and George Whitefield. A minister very liberal in his reflections on Mr. Wesley and his followers, being once in company with Mr. Whitefield, expressed his doubts concerning Mr. Wesley's salvation, and said to Mr. Whitefield, "Sir, do you think when we get to heaven, we shall see Mr. Wes-

ley? " " No, sir," replied Mr. Whitefield, " I fear not, for he will be so near the throne, and we shall be at such a distance, we shall hardly get sight of him." Whitefield gave proof of his greatness in overcoming the differences which unfortunately grew up between these two great pulpiteers. It was his Christian love which made Whitefield great. Love will make any man great, while the venom of hate will sap the powers of any genius.

One of the finest descriptions of a magnanimous man to be found in all literature is in Emerson's brief characterization of Abraham Lincoln, which was this: " His heart was as great as the world, but there was no room in it to hold the memory of wrong."

(aa) Its Abode.

The writer points out the abode of the lives of love, of the ones who are knitted together with invisible love-ties. In contrast to " is in the light " above, we have here " abideth in the light." The idea of stability is added to that of being. Love on the part of man does not create divine fellowship, but it does testify to its continuance. The absence of love shows that this fellowship has never been realized. In loving his brother the Christian follows the example of his Master and has in him the light of life. He demonstrates that he dwells in the realm of light, the light which is God. Love is an attribute which one possesses who is worthy

of dwelling in the world of light. Love is the characteristic of the life of light.

(bb) Its Attainments.

In the last phrase of this verse the author sets down the attainments of the child of love in the realm of light. This is a rare accomplishment. Only the Christ-man ever reaches such a lofty height. John says, "There is none occasion of stumbling in him." Now this is capable of two interpretations, both of which hold true to the teachings of Scripture and of life. The soul that lives in the light will not become an occasion of stumbling to himself and he will not at the same time be an occasion of stumbling to others. We can and do cause others to fall through want of love, and by this same serious defect create difficulties in our own lives. Where there is no love in the heart doubts and questionings arise and tend to overthrow the Christian faith. The want of love in the Christian's heart is the most prolific source of offenses to others or to the world. The triumph of truth and light is attained only through the reign of love.

There is a story of an old man who carried a little can of oil with him everywhere he went, and if he passed through a door that squeaked he poured a little oil on the hinges. If a gate was hard to open he oiled the latch. And thus he passed through life lubricating all hard places and making

it easier for those who came after him. People called him eccentric, and queer, and cranky, and odd, and even harder names. But the old man went steadily on, refilling his can of oil when it became empty, and oiled the hard places he found. The old gentleman did not wait until he found a creaky door or a rusty hinge and then go home to get his oil. He carried it with him. There are many of our lives that creak and grate harshly as we live them day after day. Many things go wrong with us. What we need is lubrication with the oil of kindness, gentleness, and brotherly love; then all friction will surely cease.

"Keep love in your life, my friend,
If you would have perfect joy;
Keep love, never let her depart—
For who would his life destroy?
For life's no longer than love, my friend;
When love is no more, 'tis the journey's end
And Regret and Fear shall your way attend.
Keep love in your life, my friend.

"Keep love in your life alway,
Though tempted to bid her go;
Keep love the bride of your heart,
If you would a true life know.
For Life's no longer than love, I say;
With the end of love comes the close of day,
And the chill of death 'mid the shadows gray:
Keep love in your life alway."

(b) The Life of Hate (1 John 2: 11). *"But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth because the darkness hath blinded his eyes."*

Here we have a brief sketch of the child of hate. Verse 9 contains a sweeping, general statement of the condition of the child of darkness, but here the writer goes into detail and adds a reason for his assertions.

(aa) Its Attribute.

We have here the same word as above. John refers to one "who is in the very act of hating." To him there are but two attitudes and these are expressed by the two words love and hate. All individuals either love or hate truth and God.

(bb) Its Abode.

According to the Apostle's teaching and that of the entire Bible there are but two realms in which the souls of men move. These are the sphere of light and the sphere of darkness. The abode of the child of hate is in the sphere of darkness. Darkness, the very absence and opposite of light, is where the life of hate or the life of darkness dwells.

(cc) Its Activity.

We have described here the activity of the life of hate. All of the activities of the life of darkness

are committed in the realm of darkness. The man who hates his brother is in the kingdom of darkness and never gets out of that kingdom unless he be converted and becomes a child of love and light.

(dd) Its Affliction.

Lastly, John makes mention of the awful affliction of the soul of hate. He says this man doesn't know where he is going. This does not mean that he does not know the end or destiny of his journey merely, but that he does not even know how to begin. The point of view is not the end, but the beginning of the journey. The idea is not that of proceeding to a definite point, but of leaving the present scene. John adds the cause of this ignorance. He says, " Because the darkness hath blinded his eyes." Expressed literally, we would say, because darkness has put out his eyes. " Blinded " does not convey the whole truth. The darkness has not only hindered the use of the vision, but destroyed the spiritual organ of sight.

There are certain burrowing animals,—the mole, for instance—which have taken to spending their lives beneath the surface of the ground. And nature has taken revenge upon these animals in a thoroughly natural way—she has closed up their eyes. If they mean to live in darkness, she argues, eyes are obviously a superfluous faculty or function. By neglecting them these animals made it clear they do not want them. And as one of na-

ture's fixed principles is nothing shall exist in vain, the eyes are presently taken away, are reduced to a rudimentary state. There are fishes, also, which have had to pay the same terrible forfeit for having made their abode in the dark caverns where eyes can never be used. The little fishes which have for centuries inhabited the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky apparently have perfect eyes, but a close examination reveals the eyes as a mere mockery. Externally, they are organs of vision—the front of the eye is perfect; behind, there is nothing but a mass of ruins. The optic nerve is a shrunken, atrophied, and insensate thread. These animals have organs of vision and yet they have no vision. They have eyes, but they see not. Darkness hath blinded, put out their eyes. This is what physical darkness always does. And this is what spiritual darkness always does.

III

The Conflict of Those Who Enjoy Fellowship with God as Light (1 John 2: 12–29).

The opposition between light and darkness is not a passive, static indifference, but an active, aggressive incompatibility. The one cannot and will not stay where the other is present. It is utterly impossible to make these companionable the one with the other. They can never be brought together to discuss terms of peace. They will not entertain a proposition of compromise. They are

fundamentally, immutably, eternally irreconcilable the one to the other. This situation holds true whether you have reference to the physical or spiritual elements.

This being the case, as one might expect, the children of light will be thrown inevitably into conflict with the children of darkness. Accordingly, the Apostle follows his brief outline of the conduct of those who are children of light with a brief discussion of the two-fold conflict these will experience in the world of spiritual darkness.

1. The Material Conflict (1 John 2: 12–17).

John first points out the material conflict of the children of light.

a. The Foundation of the Appeal (1 John 2: 12–14).

What he has to say about our material conflict comes in the form of an earnest appeal against worldliness. Contrary to the supposed logical order of presentation, he sets forth the foundation or basis of his appeal, and then follows with the declaration or contents of the appeal. In a word the foundation for John's appeal is the Christian life. His exhortation against worldliness is addressed only to children of light, and only because they are children of light. It is useless to speak against worldliness in talking to children of darkness. These love the world because they are of the world. The world is in darkness even until now,

and the children of darkness are of this darkness and love this darkness, even as the Master said. That part of our local church or churches that is from the world and of the world need not be expected to give ear to this exhortation against worldliness. These do not possess the basis of the divine appeal. Only the regenerated heart contains that divine element which will respond to this apostolic preachment. The unregenerate soul has no spiritual ears with which to hear the preacher's denunciation of worldliness.

(1) The Appeal of Affection. *"I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake"* (2: 12).

It seems more reasonable to understand that John is viewing his readers from two different points of view, namely, as "little children," and as "little ones," with two minor divisions under each of these two heads, which are the same in both cases, except some additions to the second point of the second main division. The first appellation expresses the mutual fellowship of nature between children of light and points to their spiritual adoption into the family of light, the family of God. It is the appeal of Christian affection. What a high appeal is this the preacher is making! Surely the children, the sons and daughters of the only royal family will be moved by this term of love and

kinship. Will they be able to resist the message he is about to deliver with such chords of love as these as his foundation? The children of light will not fail to be affected by this term of endearment for they are possessed with the divine nature to which he is directing his remarks. We are not to understand that John looked upon his hearers as being primarily his spiritual children. They were his children in Christ only because they were children of God such as he was. Their mutual affection and fellowship was Christ-born.

He follows with a special reason for appealing to them on the ground of their mutual fellowship of nature—" because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." The word " forgiven " is an interesting one. It is very significant. It literally means " sent away." Just as the sins of the transgressor of God's ancient people were " sent away " on the scapegoat into the wilderness, in a similar manner are the sins of God's spiritual Israel sent away on the heavenly Lamb in His death on the cross. John does not neglect to mention the means by which our sins are removed, for he adds " for his name's sake," and the name here stands for the spiritual significance of that sacred personage. The writer indicates no limitation to the sending. Having no boundaries assigned, we are correct in concluding that the preacher means to say that our sins are " sent away " immeasurably far.

Dr. Chapman tells of a man who had been a

professor of mathematics in a German university, but who became a wreck through strong drink. He came to one of Dr. Chapman's meetings, forlorn and dejected, and took a seat in the rear of the room. He was converted and became a member of the church. It was Dr. Chapman's custom to meet the men of his church every Sunday morning, before going into his pulpit, for a short conference on things pertaining to the Christian life. He says one morning he told them that our sins were taken from us as far as the east is from the west, and then seeing the old professor before him, he said, " Professor, that is a mathematical proposition for you. How far is the distance from the east to the west? " The professor reached for his pencil and note book, when suddenly he stopped and burst into tears; and facing the crowd of men he said, " Men, you cannot measure, for if you put your stake here and east be ahead of you and west behind you, you can go around the world and come back to your stake and east will still be ahead of you and west will still be behind you. The distance is immeasurable. And thank God, that is where my sins have gone."

(a) The Mature Christians. *" I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him that is from the beginning "* (2: 13a).

All believers are one in the forgiveness of their sin, but may be distinguished by or because of the

circumstances of their lives. Differences of experience usually correspond to the differences of age. Mature Christians like those addressed by John, would be fathers in years. The characteristic of mature Christians, fathers in Israel, is knowledge, the fruit of experience. John based his appeal to each individual class on that which they had gained. The knowledge here referred to is the result of past experience and grace, but which still abides. When we come to know Christ, the Word, the Word through whom all things were made, and in whom all things consist, who, as life, was the light of men, who was ever coming into the world which He had made, who became flesh, then we have gained the finest and fullest knowledge, a knowledge which belongs only to the completest life, and which is had only by the full grown in Christ. These are the fathers of the Church and they possess this rare ground of appeal on which John makes his exhortation against worldliness. Because of their knowledge of the world, because of the work in which they have been engaged through the years, and because of their consistent walk which they had led, they have come to have a mental and spiritual grasp of Jesus Christ as the eternal plan, the creative power, and the supreme purpose of the ages, and upon these grounds John shortly will call upon them to stand true to their profession as children of light in a world of darkness.

It is these mature believers who can sing with appreciation and understanding the following words of Charles H. Gabriel:

How sweet is the love of my Saviour!
'Tis boundless and deep as the sea;
And best of it all, it is daily
Growing sweeter and sweeter to me.

I know He is ever beside me!
Eternity only will prove
The height and the depth of His mercy,
And the breadth of His infinite love.

And it is these mature ones who can understand and appreciate these lines by an unknown author:

I hear it singing, singing sweetly,
Softly in an undertone;
Singing as if God had taught it,
"It is better further on."

Night and day it sings the same song,
Sings it while I sit alone,
Sings it so the heart can hear it,
"It is better further on."

Sits upon the grave and sings it,
Sings it when the heart would groan,
Sings it when the shadows darken,
"It is better further on."

Further on! how much further?
Count the milestones one by one?
No, no counting, only trusting,
"It is better further on."

(b) The Immature Christians. *"I write to you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one"* (2: 13b).

The second specified class of children of the heavenly family is called young men, and these include all inexperienced saints in full vigour of opening life. John has a special ground of appeal to the young believer, and this is because they have overcome the evil one. The opponent of the Christian body takes on now a personal aspect. Darkness has its prince also. "Have overcome" does not point merely to a past achievement, but to an accomplishment that remains effective. This then is the preacher's basis of appeal to the young to refrain from worldliness, namely, their mastery, past and present, immediate and continuous, over the ruler of this world of spiritual darkness. But it is not to be understood that the invigorated Christians gained their notable victory in themselves or by themselves, apart from Christ, but because they have consecrated all of their natural powers to Christ, who indwells them and imparts to them of His sufficient and inexhaustible resources.

Naturalists tell of a small animal called the ichneumon, which is not over two or three inches in size, but can defeat and destroy a venomous snake that is over a yard in length and many times larger than itself. But it is noticeable that the ichneumon never fights over two or three feet away

from a plant whose leaves contain the antidote for the snake bite. When the reptile plants its poisonous fangs in the little creature, at once it drags itself to the bush, chews a leaf, is instantly restored, and returns refreshed and renewed to the conflict. After a little the ichneumon is bitten again, and feeling death creeping along the veins, flies at once to the shrub, takes another mouthful of the restoring leaf and returns with a new lease of strength and life to the battle. It is just a question of time. The snake grows weaker and weaker, while the ichneumon is continually renewed. So after a while the larger animal goes down in the remarkable contest, while the little ichneumon, flushed, triumphant, and jubilant, waves its right paw in the air. No matter how strong the enemy may be, if we keep close to Christ Jesus and feed on Him, we are sure to be victorious. From Him the Christian believer is enabled to draw strength for every conflict and a measure of endurance which will enable him, in the end, to come off more than conqueror.

But it is even as the unknown poet has said:

"I cannot do it alone,
The waves run fast and high,
And fogs close chill around,
And the light goes out in the sky;
But I know that we two
Shall win in the end—
Jesus and I.

"Coward and wayward and weak,
I change with the changing sky;
To-day so eager and brave;
To-morrow not caring to try;
But He never gives in,
So we two shall win—
Jesus and I."

(2) The Appeal of Subjection. *"I have written [I wrote] to you, little ones, because ye know the Father"* (2: 13c).

Under the second main head in the ground of appeal the preacher's audience is looked upon from the standpoint of their subjection or subordination. The state of the child of light in the two appellations given them is described by two conflicting statements. The difference, however, is only apparent. The seeming discord disappears when one notices the directions of these terms. The position of the children of light is one of exaltation when viewed from the standpoint of the state of sin and darkness from which they have been delivered when their sins were sent away on the heavenly sacrifice, and they were made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and, in consequence thereto, were adopted into the heavenly family, the royal family in the realm of light. They are addressed in terms of their subjection or subordination when they are compared to their aged, gifted, and saintly apostolic leader, and in turn to the Author and Source of all light and life, the personification of

the light in which they abide, their heavenly Father.

We are to keep in mind that the Apostle is warning his hearers against loving this present world. In exhorting them to refrain from this evil, he uses as his second ground of appeal, his second argument, their spiritual subjection, not only to God, the Author of their lives, but to him as their undershepherd. When believers have become so engrossed and entangled with the things of this world that they will not listen to the advice or heed the admonition of their spiritual leaders, their consciences are likely to have become so seared that they cannot hear the call of the Spirit to higher and nobler things.

The special reason given for writing his readers in view of their subjection to and dependence upon their apostolic guide and the Author of their lives, is because of their personal and intimate knowledge of their Father. This spiritual knowledge involves a direct spiritual connection; it is conscious and experimental. It is such a knowledge as Job possessed, when he exclaimed:

"But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And at last He will stand up upon the earth;
And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed,
Then without my flesh shall I see God;
Whom I, even I, shall see, on my side,
And mine eye shall behold, and not as a stranger."

This same personal, conscious knowledge gave rise to that famous and comforting affirmation of Paul,

when he said: " For I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." It is the precious privilege of all believers to come into conscious communion with, abiding fellowship with, of having intimate personal knowledge of the Father. The rich and the poor, the high and the low, the bond and the free, the pulpit and the pew, may come into the secret of His presence.

This rare, rich knowledge is strikingly illustrated in a pathetic incident in the life of the Rev. John William Jent, which he tells as follows:

" Many of us, who, like Paul on the Damascus highway, have found Jesus, will never know what we have in Him until, like Paul after suffering with Him, we find Him out.

" My father was one of that stern sort who demand and secure obedience. I revered him, for my mother taught me that he was one of the best of fathers; and I wanted to be like him. But in my misunderstanding and timidity I did not get very close to him.

" I recall with inexpressible emotion the hour this barrier was dissolved in a great, common sorrow. It was the dark night in which my mother slipped away from us and went to the Father's house. She had been an invalid for years; and yet how she had stood by my father and borne him up with her prayers during his early ministry in the Ozarks!

We were all worn with nights of watching. My father told me to go to bed, saying that if there was any change he would wake me. About two o'clock I felt his touch on my shoulder, and I came out of my sleep with grim foreboding. 'Son,' he said, 'get up: your mamma is going.'

"I followed him into the chamber of death. My father sat on one side of the bed, and I threw myself across the other. Mother talked calmly and freely about her translation. To my father she expressed regret that she had to leave him, and she urged him to be faithful in his ministry. Then she turned to me and exhorted me to be a good boy, and said that some day we should meet again. Then she asked for my baby sister and kissed her good-bye. She seemed worried that we were weeping. She talked of the angels in the room. Finally she lifted her eyes to the ceiling and whispered, 'Lord, I come.' That was the end.

"Kind friends took charge, and my father took my little sister in his left arm and put his right about my shoulders, and we turned into the parlour. He sat down in the big armchair and drew me up to his knee, and I climbed into his lap. He laid his head over on my shoulder, and his whole frame shook with emotion as he sobbed out his grief: 'O boy!—boy!—our best friend is gone!'

"'Our'—the word of common sorrow. It gripped my heart. I threw my arms about my father and hugged him to me as I said, 'Yes, Pa,

that's so; but, thank God, we have each other yet! ' I saw the door open into his big heart, a heart as tender as a mother's. I walked in, and have been in ever since.

" That was just the beginning. At sixteen I felt the call of God to the ministry, and I soon followed my father into the work. We went out together as pastors of country churches and comrades in old-fashioned, brush-arbour revival meetings. One night I would preach and Pa would lead the singing. The next night he would preach, and I would lead the singing. During that fine fellowship of three or four years, we saw hundreds saved.

" I was finding out my father, learning his bigness and goodness and, above all, such a tenderness of soul as I had never dreamed of. We became bosom companions and grew together. Many a time, late in the night, as we turned into a fine country bed after a prolonged after-service, have I rolled into his arms as we talked it out heart to heart through the hours. I know my father to-day. He still abides in the ministry to his churches in those hills. He is the joy of my heart, and I am the joy of his.

" Likewise, we can find out our Lord only as we live, and labour, and suffer with Him."

(a) The Mature Christians. *" I have written [I wrote] to you, fathers, because ye know him that is from the beginning "* (2: 14a).

The special reason given here for appealing to the mature, experienced Christians is the same as that given above. But there is a difference in the points of view, or the directions of the arguments. Above the fathers' knowledge of the Eternal Son was viewed in the light of their forgiveness of sin. No one can know, say nothing of appreciate, Him who was from the beginning, save through the state of the forgiveness of sin. Here the fathers' knowledge of the Eternal One is viewed in the light of their personal, experimental knowledge of God. No one knows the Father if not through the Son in the forgiveness of sin, and no one can come to an intellectual apprehension of the Eternal Son as the sufficient plan, power, and purpose of the world save through a spiritual acquaintance with the Father. Westcott suggests that, "the knowledge of Christ as the Word, active from the beginning of creation, includes all we know." "At the same time," he says, "this knowledge is regarded in two different aspects corresponding to the two general ideas of forgiveness and fatherhood."

Lord Guthrie, according to *The British Weekly,* said in a recent address that one Sunday when he was on his way to church in London he passed a lay-preacher addressing a crowd in the open air. "I have not been to college, but I have been to Calvary," he heard the speaker say. That day he heard Canon Liddon, Dr. Oswald Dykes, and C. H. Spurgeon. After the lapse of many

years he found himself unable to recall a single sentence uttered by any of the celebrated preachers on that day, but there still remained with him the words of the earnest layman. Calvary is the starting point. It is the beginning and foundation of all spiritual knowledge. To know Calvary, the Christ of Calvary, and the contribution of the Christ of Calvary to all times and to all things is to possess the finest and completest knowledge. This is the knowledge that is open to the fathers of God's spiritual Israel.

> (b) The Immature Christian. *"I have written* [*I wrote*] *to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God abideth in you and ye have overcome the evil one"* (2: 14b).

The particular reason assigned for appealing to the immature Christians is the same as above. There is this exception, however; here we have two causes assigned for their victory over the evil one. Natural qualifications is the one, while supernatural invigoration is the other. By natural qualification we mean those elements of physical, intellectual, and psychical powers of the saved men consecrated to spiritual ends. The spiritual invigoration comes through the medium of truth which indwells the believer. The words of truth are but the channels of the Truth, the Logos. The words of Christ are but the precursors of the indwelling Christ. He,

the anointed and triumphant One, is the direct, immediate, and sole cause of the victory of the young believer.

Some years ago a lady went to consult a famous New York physician about her health. She was a woman of nervous temperament. She gave the doctor a list of her symptoms, and answered his questions only to be astonished at his brief prescription at the end: " Go home and read your Bible an hour a day, then come back to me a month from to-day." And he bowed her out before she could protest. At first she was inclined to be angry; then she reflected that at least the prescription was not an expensive one. She went home determined to read conscientiously her neglected Bible. In a month she went back to the doctor's office a different person, and asked him how he knew that was just what she needed. For answer the physician turned to his desk. There, worn and marked, lay an open Bible. " Madam," he said, " if I were to omit my daily reading of this book I would lose my greatest source of strength and skill."

b. The Declaration of the Appeal (1 John 2: 15–17).

In the foregoing verses John has pointed out both the general blessings and privileges of believers, the forgiveness of sin and the fatherhood of God, and also the particular attainments and accomplishments in the far reaching wisdom of

the old and the spiritual strength of the young. Having thus carefully and tactfully laid the foundation of the appeal he goes on to give a declaration of his appeal. It follows as a matter of natural consequence that the children of light, who enjoy close and intimate fellowship with God as light, cannot love the world which is under the sway of darkness.

(1) The Statement of the Prohibition. "*Love not the world nor the things in the world*" (2: 15a).

We are given here a general statement in the form of a prohibition. The command of love is naturally followed by the command of love not. The prohibition is broad and sweeping. The mandate is not pronounced to any particular class, but to all. "The world" Westcott defines as "the order of finite being regarded as apart from God." He suggests that "the Roman empire with its idolatry of the emperor as the representative of the state, presented the idea in a concrete and impressive form." He says further that "the system as an organized whole is in other places considered as the dominant form of life, the age."

Dr. Scofield thinks that the word "world," in the sense of the present world-system, the ethically bad sense of the word, refers to "the order, arrangement, under which Satan has organized the world of unbelieving mankind upon his cosmic

principles of force, greed, selfishness, ambition, and pleasure." He also suggests that this system is imposing and powerful with armies and fleets; is often outwardly religious, scientific, cultured, and elegant; but seething with national and commercial rivalries and ambitions, is upheld in any real crisis only by armed force, and is dominated by Satanic principle.

Elsewhere, if not here, the word is to be given yet a broader meaning. I feel confident that we are enjoined not to love the world when the word is used in an ethically good sense. The word translated love here is the strongest word the Greek has for human emotion. It is this word that expresses what should be our feeling as believers of God. There is no sense in which the word "world" can be taken when it can rightly become the object of the affection of our hearts. The rocks and the hills, the flowers and the trees, the birds and the cattle, things terrestrial and things celestial, all are given of God to man for his dominion and enjoyment, when used for legitimate and subservient ends. When any or all of these become the objects of the creature's affections, they become offensive to the Creator. Whatever is treated as complete within itself without reference to God is to that extent a rival to God. To look upon anything as that which has realized its proper sphere and fulfillment in a finite order and without God is sin.

When the preacher announces that he is going to preach against worldliness we usually think that he is going to condemn card-playing, theatre-going, dancing and so forth. It is true that these are manifestations of forms of worldliness, but they do not exhaust the meaning of the term. It is possible that they are not the worst forms of worldliness. There are individuals who seem to have no sense of another world except this world. Their senses are acute and sensitive only to things material. As to things which lie beyond the border line of the tangible and visible they are "non compos mentis." This is the fundamental cause of all worldliness. The average condemnation of worldliness barely penetrates the cuticle of the animal. The only antidote for worldliness is "other-worldliness." To abuse the world for its worldliness, whether in the Church or out of the Church, is but to put the cart before the horse. The man who enjoys a heavenly citizenship finds no abiding pleasure in anything temporal.

"I thought it was a pretty fair sort of telescope for one that wasn't very big," said Uncle Silas. "I rigged it up in the attic by the high north window, and had it fixed so it would swing round easy. I took a deal of satisfaction in looking through it—the sky seemed so wide and full of wonders; so when Hester was here I thought I would give her the pleasure, too. She stayed a long time up-stairs, and seemed to be enjoying it.

When she came down, I asked her if she discovered anything new. 'Yes,' she said. 'Why, it made everybody's house seem so near that I seemed to be right beside them, and I find out what John Pritchard's folks are doing in their out-kitchen. I've wondered what they had a light for there night after night, and I just turned the glass on their window and found out. They are cutting apples to dry—folks as rich as them cutting apples!' And actually that was all that woman had seen! With the whole heavens before her to study, she spent her time prying into the affairs of her neighbours! And there are lots more like her—with and without telescopes."

Kosantone, a converted Chinese, when in America on a visit, was deeply impressed with the little difference he saw between the style of living of many professing Christians and the men of the world. Adverting to the matter on one occasion, he said, making at the same time a large sweep with his arms, "When the disciples of my country come out from the world, they come clear out."

(2) The Arguments for the Prohibition (1 John 2: 15b–17).

Following a brief statement of his prohibition of worldliness the author submits his arguments against this form of sin.

(a) The Argument of Expulsion. *"If any one love the world, the love of the*

Father is not in him; because all that is in the world, the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eye, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (2: 15b–16).

Here we have a strong presentation of the argument of expulsion. Light and darkness cannot occupy the same sphere at the same time; heat and cold cannot fill the same vessel at the same time; love for God and love for the world cannot sway the same heart at the same time. The law of expulsion is a sure cure for worldliness.

The " all " that the Apostle has in mind in verse sixteen is not the material things themselves, but the attitudes of men to these earthly things. This is made clear in his following comment. A material thing, such as a silver dollar, an automobile, or a house and lot does not possess moral quality or qualities. Nothing but man can be either good or bad. Things become bad only in the hands of a bad man, or when they are misused or abused by man. In like manner any material thing may take on good moral qualities when in the hands of a good man. The three corrupt or sinful attitudes, under which John arranges " all that is in the world," cover the whole ground of worldliness, of the temptation to set up the creature as the end. These describe the attitudes of the man of the world as to himself, as to things external, and as to his fellow man. The three tendencies here out-

lined naturally recall the three temptations of Jesus, and which have obvious points of contact. The first temptation corresponds to the first and most elementary form of the desire of the flesh, the desire of the simplest support of natural life. The offer of the kingdoms of the civilized world and their glory, which is placed second in Luke's account, seems to answer to the loftiest appeal of the desire of the eye, the power of commanding all that is fairest and most attractive in the world. In this we are also taught that no aim, however true and noble, must be allowed to supplant the absolute homage due to God. And again the call to claim an open manifestation of God's protecting power touches the root of "the vainglory of life," in which endowments and gifts are used arbitrarily for personal ostentation.

It is to be remembered that we are considering here the material conflict of the Christian. Consequently we do not have here an enumeration of spiritual sins. These are not primarily of the world, or in the world. The writer is here discussing only the relation of the believer to the cosmos as an external system which has lost its true character. The argument of John has been stated very briefly by the Master in these words: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

An eccentric man once built his house on the extreme western coast of Ireland, because he wished to reside next to an American town. In a sense

he did live next to one, yet the Atlantic Ocean stretched between. When we have brought the worldly, sensual, or selfish life as near the Christian life as possible, an ocean wider and deeper than the Atlantic Ocean will roll between them. We must belong to one or the other. The Israelites must serve God or Baal. The followers of Christ must do likewise.

Mr. D. L. Moody is reported to have said on one occasion, "I am sick and tired of border-Christians. I wish they would stay in the world, unless they will come clean out. There is a great difference between being in the world, and having the world in us; let a ship be in the water and it's all right but let the water be in the ship and down she goes."

Some people will say, "Oh, religion—it is all about limitations and restrictions. It means that a man is to be reined in, and not allowed the legitimate use of his natural passions and appetites." Not at all. I have lately had an opportunity of seeing some of the dark and erratic ways of motor-cars, and one of the great things they say of a car is, "I have got it under complete control." Well, what does it mean? That it won't go? You don't suppose that the man who has got a motor-car at the side of a road, which absolutely will not move, is inclined to say, "My car is under perfect control." The ideal of a car that is subject to perfect control is that it will travel easily at its highest

speed, that it will do exactly what is required of it, and do it easily without stress or strain. That is the complete ideal. The Christian ideal is the greatest spiritual progress. Worldliness retards this, and is therefore to be avoided.

(b) The Argument from Duration. *"And the world is passing away, and the desire thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever"* (2: 17).

John's second argument for his prohibition of worldliness is from the duration of the world as compared to the eternal abiding of the children of God, the only ones who can do the will of God. The world is pictured in the act, the present and continued act, of passing off the stage of action and of being; while we are made to behold and rejoice in the eternal existence of those who have perceived and practiced the will of the Infinite. This reason should make a mighty appeal to the sensible men of the world, as well as to afford abiding comfort to those who have accepted the Son of God as Saviour and Lord.

In Central America there grows a plant called nardoo, which, although it satisfies hunger, is said to be destitute of all the nutritious elements, and that a party of Englishmen once perished of starvation while feeding daily upon it. This is the experience of those who find their portion in earthly things. They obtain their desires, but perish.

Capers Satterlee tells the following story which simply and strikingly illustrates John's argument of duration: "Two men sat by the flickering light of a campfire. The flames danced, fluttered, and leaped up again. After a while, the last flame trembled, sputtered and died. Overhead, in glittering array, the stars burned steadily, constantly; and only the light of these unchanging stars fell upon the silent campers now. At length one of the men turned to the other and said: "What a lesson of life in campfire and stars! The stars are our ideals, our visions of justice, of truth, of service, of God. The campfires are our passing desires for things that flash and sparkle for a while, only to die down to dead embers. The big moose we trailed so long this entire hunt, that business deal we want to put over—all are campfires. Their brightness and glamour will soon fade out into mere ashes of memory. Our ideals, our visions, the true and higher things of our lives—these, like the stars, will shine forever."

"Gaily, warmly, burns the fire:
Leaping, dancing, laughs its light.
Colder, farther, fainter, higher,
Shines the constant stars of night.

"Campfires bright and short-lived pleasures,
Sparkle, flicker, and are fled:
Stars and visions, deathless treasures,
Gleam and guide till time is dead."

2. The Spiritual Conflict (1 John 2: 18–29).

Passing from a survey of the material conflict of the followers of Christ, the struggle which Christians will experience in their contact with the visible, tangible world, the writer recounts the spiritual conflict of the people of God, the warfare between the forces of light and the forces of darkness.

a. The Foes of the Conflict (1 John 2: 18–21).

(1) A Proclamation of the Foes (1 John 2: 18, 19).

In verses eighteen and nineteen we have recorded a proclamation of the spiritual adversaries.

(a) Their Appearance as Christians. "*My little ones, it is a last hour, and as ye heard that Antichrist cometh, even now many Antichrists have arisen; whence we perceive that it is a last hour*" (2: 18).

The name by which the Apostle addresses his readers, "my little ones," indicates that he is speaking as their spiritual superior, from the standpoint of advanced age, wider experience, and a higher calling, and not from the basis of their mutual and spiritual kinship. The suggestion of the present, continuous passing away of the material world in the foregoing verse, gives rise to the

thought of "a last hour," which is evidenced by a decisive sign of a visible change in the Christian body. We note that the Apostle does not say "the last hour," pointing out a certain, definite last hour, but "a last hour," which might be one of many of like nature and character.

Westcott suggests that the expression "a last time," or "a last season," or "the last days," is used in the Old Testament for the distant future on which the prophet's eye is fixed. Thus in Genesis 49: 1; Num. 24: 14; it points to the time when Israel shall have entered upon possession of Canaan, the first stage in the fulfillment of the Divine promise. In Isaiah 2: 2 and in other verses from other sacred writers, it describes the time when Zion shall be restored and the people shall fear and obey the Lord. In Ezekiel 38: 16 it refers to some particular season of signal deliverance. Thus the phrase in its Biblical sense includes in part the notion of "the age to come" and the immediate preparation for it. In post-Biblical times the age to come was sharply distinguished from the period of trial by which it was to be ushered in; and "the latter days" come to be regarded as a season of conflict and suffering through which the divine victory should be accomplished. This appears to be the ruling idea of the phrase in New Testament usage. The phrase here seems to mark the general character of the period and not its specific relation to the end. It was a

period of critical change, a last hour, but not the last hour.

But who are these Antichrists? In issuing a proclamation of the spiritual foes with which the saints of God are having a spiritual conflict, John reveals the fact that in appearance they are Christians. They had heard of these in general terms in the evangelistic message and in the teachings of the Apostle. In second Thessalonians 2: 3 Paul presents these general ideas in a typical adversary, which he calls "the man of sin." It is observed that we are introduced not to the Antichrist, but Antichrist. The absence of the article indicates that the term had become current as a proper name. This is Mr. Antichrist. But who is this individual, or this family of individuals? The word, we are told, means more than simply an adversary of Christ. So far as the term is concerned it may signify one who takes the place of Christ, or one who, under the same character, opposes Christ. It seems best to understand that Antichrist is one who, while assuming the guise of Christ, at the same time opposes Christ. The Antichrist purposes to do and to preserve what He, the true Christ, did while here on the earth, but who at the same time denies Him. This is quite different to being a false Christ, or the false Christ, who is only a pretender to the Messianic office. John is not here announcing the great Antichrist but only Antichrist or Antichrists, the preparatory em-

bodiments of the one great Antichrist, his forerunner. The word here might be only the personification of the principles shown in the different Antichrists.

The same term used to describe the advent of Jesus Christ is used to tell of the coming of Antichrist. In each case it signifies more than a single coming, though it includes that. Antichrist is to have as many appearances as the Christ Himself. John not only announces the coming of Antichrist, but he also points to the arrival of many Antichrists, and he uses a word that identifies them with the Christian body. These had arisen, or made their appearance within the pale of the Church. Their manifestations within the Christian fold produced a critical conflict and its attendant trial which is to come before an end.

(b) Their Difference from Christians. *"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out that they may be made manifest that they all are not of us"* (2: 19).

We have set forth in this verse the difference of the Antichrists to the Christian body. By the expression, "they went out from us," the writer does not mean their removal from, but he points out their Christian origin. These Antichrists profess Christian origin, they retain their Chris-

tian name, they proffer themselves as the real Christian body. But John informs us that while these belonged at first to the outward Christian body and shared all its privileges and blessings, they were not really of that body, they did not draw their life from the life of the Christians, or from the same common Source, and hence were not living members of that body. Another point John would have us note is the fact that if this group of Christian professors had truly shared the Christian life with the true believers, they would have formally remained with them. Their separation from the true body of Christ revealed the imperfection of their fellowship and life. He claims in closing that their departure from the Christian society was for the purpose that they might stand out in their true light, namely, that they were not truly, vitally, spiritually of them. And John does not say all of them are not of us, but not any of them. He does not allow a single exception. This departure too was of divine appointment, it was within the plan of God for the avoidance of any future evil. There does not seem to be any formal or enforced discipline. Their divergence was brought about by a courageous presentation of the truth and a firm stand for the right.

(2) A Recognition of the Foes (1 John 2: 20, 21).

In verses 20 and 21 John points out and dis-

cusses a recognition of our foes and how these will be recognized.

> (a) The Unction. *"And ye have an unction from the Holy One; And ye all know"* (2: 20).

In verse 20 he indicates the means or medium by which this recognition is made. He says that believers perceive these false teachers, Antichrists, through the unction which they have received from the Holy One. He intimates, if he does not openly declare here, that the Christian body would know these spiritual adversaries, even if they did not have this apostolic revelation. Christians are in a real sense the anointed of God, consecrated by God and to God as prophets, priests, and kings, and by virtue of this consecration are endowed with corresponding blessings and power. The word unction here signifies not merely the act of anointing, but as well the anointing oil. This act of anointing marks the connection of the Christians with their spiritual Head, Christ, while the unction itself, the spiritual anointing oil, forms that spiritual connection itself. As Christ was anointed of God for His office and work, so are Christians anointed for their offices and works. This Old Testament symbol, the anointing oil, is used here to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit which is the characteristic endowment of all Christians. This spiritual unction, this gift of the

spirit, came formally and in a special way upon the Christian society on the day of Pentecost. According to promise, this Paraclete came from Christ whom He said He would send from the Father. The Holy One here evidently refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. The practical significance, the resultant of this gift of the spirit, is spiritual perception. John seems to say, " ye have an unction, and by virtue of that gift of the Holy Spirit, ye know all things; ye have complete and certain knowledge; no false teaching, no Antichrist can deceive you, if you are true to and exercise your rights and gifts." Christians need no collegiate or theological course to heighten or enlighten their spiritual perception. Educational institutions are not ordained for these ends.

I know one of God's men in this, Franklin County, Alabama, who is a living illustration of John's contention here. This man has a painfully poor knowledge of the English language, but he enjoys a wonderfully clear perception of the divine truth. It is very seldom that he ever speaks a correct English sentence, but I have never yet found a text of Scripture that he could not interpret intelligently, and to my mind, correctly. He has never been inside of a college, but he has finished the course at Calvary. He has unfortunately been deprived of any theological training, but he has received the preparation of the Holy Spirit.

(b) The Urge. *"I have not written to you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth"* (2: 21).

The Apostle enlarges upon this acquisition of knowledge in the reception of the spirit, the unction of the spirit, and states that the only object he had in writing them was, not the dispensing of fresh, and additional knowledge, but to bring into active and decisive use the knowledge which they already possessed. He has two reasons for addressing them regarding this divine unction and their hour of trial:

(aa) Because they do know the truth. In this fact the author and his readers stand on common ground.

(bb) Because no lie is of the truth. This gives sufficient explanation for this note of warning. John may have meant that these were objects of the Christian's knowledge, namely, the truth and the fact that no lie is of the truth. The absolute incompatibility of any falsehood with "the truth" is laid down as a clear rule for the protection of the Christians in the presence of seductive teachers. One special function of the spirit was to guide believers in the way of all truth.

Error is regarded here in its positive and active form as a part of "the lie," which is the opposite of "the truth." Each and every lie is branded as not being in "the truth." The source or author

of falsehood is declared by Jesus to be Satan himself. John describes here a rare heritage and acquisition of the Christian group. They have an unction which imparts to them faculties by which they cannot only discern the truth, all of the truth, but the opposite of the truth, " the lie," every lie. Not even the mature and gifted Apostle could add to their spiritual lore. The writer is only writing to arouse them to a use and exercise of the faculties they possess. The New Testament furnishes us with some striking examples where this spiritual discernment was used by the early Christians and to a great advantage and profit of the early Church.

Once a true preacher of the Gospel went into a certain community and found that a false teacher had deceived the members of a certain flock and led them astray. When this man of God met this deceiver he said to him: " Some day a preacher of the Word is coming into this place and ring the Gospel bell, and, when he does, the Lord's flock are going to hear and recognize that sweet music, and come back to the Shepherd's fold again."

b. The Fact in the Conflict (2: 22–29).

It was not enough for John to announce the foes of the Christians in their spiritual conflict and how they would come to recognize these deceivers. His task was to declare also the fact over which this warfare was waged and how the believers would come to know this spiritual fact.

(1) A Declaration of the Fact (2: 22–26).

In the discussion above the Apostle made a proclamation of the spiritual foes; here he makes a corresponding declaration of the fact of their spiritual conflict.

(a) The Essence of the Fact (2: 22–23).

aa. The Prince Deceiver. *"Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son"* (2: 22).

The mention of lie in the closing verse of the preceding paragraph gives rise to the opening query in the passage before us. It springs up rather abruptly. John seems impatient to give expression to his pent up feelings and convictions. By the word "liar" he means the embodiment of the principle of falsehood. We notice he says "the liar," not merely a liar. We are considering what is to the apostolic mind the chief liar, the prince of liars. "A liar" may refer only to one who is guilty of a particular sin, but "the liar" is the person who carries in his personality the sum of all that is false. John hastens to answer his own question as quickly as he asked it. To him "the liar" is the one, only the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ. "Jesus" is the earthly name of our Lord; it was the name given the Babe of

Bethlehem by the Father. "Christ" is the heavenly name of this sacred personage. The preacher is saying here that "the liar" is that one who denies that the man Jesus was the God Christ. He further remarks that such a one is none other than Antichrist, that one who, pretending to be the Christ, does at the same time deny the Christ. But to deny the fact that Jesus is the Christ, in full significance, is also to deny the Father as well as the Son. We understand that to deny the Father means to deny the Fatherhood of God, the capacity of God to be a father. It is readily seen that a denial of the one is in reality a denial of the other. To conceive of God as father is to admit the possibility of the Son. To deny the possibility of Son carries with it a denial of the fact of Divine Fatherhood. Antichrist denies both the Fatherhood and Sonship of God.

Westcott says in interpreting this verse: "The denial of the personal union of true manhood and true Godhood in Christ involves the denial of the essential relations of Sonship and Fatherhood in Divine Nature. The conception of this relation in the immanent Trinity prepares the way for the fact of the incarnation; and conversely, the fact of the incarnation gives reality to the moral conception of God as active love without which Theism becomes a formula."

When the Apostle inserts a negative in the phrase here he gives a positive and aggressive char-

acter to the negation. The foe of the Christian denies that Jesus is the Christ whenever and wherever the claim is made; but in addition, he also affirms on his own part that the Nazarene is not God. We are led to infer that Antichrist will carry on an aggressive campaign against Jesus Christ, the God-man.

This remark does not seem to be addressed to one who denies the Messiahship of Jesus from the Jewish point of view. It is to be applied to a later form of thought. A common gnostic theory was that "the æon Christ" descended upon the man Jesus at His baptism, and left Him before the Passion. Those who held such a doctrine deny that Jesus was the Christ; and in so doing, they deny the union of the Divine and the human in one person. John preached that "the Word became flesh," but it was this fundamental doctrine that the gnostic theory opposed.

By the use of the term "the Son," John brings out distinctly what is involved in the fact that the Christ and Jesus are personally one. He does not think of this person first as divine and then as human; in his thought he includes both of these conceptions.

bb. The People Deceived. *"Every one that denieth the Son hath not even the Father; he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also"* (2: 23).

The expression "denieth the Son" here is the equivalent of the fuller saying above—"denieth that Jesus is the Christ." We are informed here that every one who denies that the man Jesus is the Son of God not only does not have Him whom he rejects, but that he also does not enjoy the presence and fellowship of the Father whom he professes to regard and worship. A denial of the "Son" involves a loss of the Father, not only because the ideas of Fatherhood and Sonship are correlative, but because the Son alone can reveal the Father. It is only in the Son that we possess a revelation of the Father. Jesus voiced this bold claim in these pointed words: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The negative used here retains its full force and makes John say "has not even the Father," though this result might seem to be against expectation, and contrary to the claim and wish of the false teachers. We are not told here that he that denieth the Son denieth the Father also, but that he hath not even the Father. Such a one might shrink from denying the Father. He might even go so far as to claim to do Him honour. But the Apostle announces that the one who denies the Son does not enjoy the communion and fellowship of the Father as one enjoys the possession of a living friend.

This truth can be given a positive expression. John informs us that the one who confesses the Son not only confesses the Father in this act of

faith, but that he also comes into that relationship in which he can have conscious communion with the Father. By confession here is meant an open acknowledgment of the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. To know the Son as Son is to have all and such knowledge as we can have at present of the Father. Hence he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also as well as the Son whom he directly acknowledges. Here again we are furnished an explicit statement of this point by Jesus when He said: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." In the mind and teachings of Jesus the Son and the Father are one.

The theological conflict in John's day was waged on the question of the Deity of Jesus Christ. The war of this age is over the same question. The fight was never more fierce than at the present hour. A denial of the Sonship of Jesus has been quite prevalent in certain theological and academic circles, but advocates of this heresy have spoken for years in rather subdued tones. In recent years, however, these false teachers have been more bold in pronouncing their views. One of the latest of this school of thought to come out clearly in the open against the Deity of Jesus Christ is Professor Shirley Jackson Case, in his book *A New Life of Jesus*. Professor Case not only declares that the Deity of Jesus Christ is not set forth in the Gospels, which he holds are very unreliable, but he goes

so far as to affirm that not even our Lord Himself thought of Himself as being the Son of God.

A Jewish soldier had been attending services where he heard much of the character and teaching of Christ. He went to his Rabbi and said: "Rabbi, the Christians say that the Christ has already come, while we claim that He is yet to come." "Yes," assented the Rabbi. "Well," asked the young soldier, "when our Christ comes, what will he have on Jesus Christ?" What the Rabbi said we do not know. What could he say?

If Jesus were not divine, why did He permit Thomas to call Him "Lord" and "my God," without rebuking him? Either He was divine or an unbalanced fanatic, or an arrogant imposter. When a blacksmith preacher was being examined by the conference committee, he was asked how he would prove the Deity of Jesus. The tears sprang to his eyes as he replied: "Why, bless you, my brother, He saved my soul."

(b) The Issues of the Fact (2: 24, 25).

aa. Internal Coalition. *"As for you, let that which ye heard, from the beginning abide in you. If that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father"* (2: 24).

The pronoun "you" stands at the head of the sentence in contrast to the false teachers mentioned

in the foregoing verse. In unfolding the essence of the truth, in the above statements, the writer set forth the duty of the believers; he tells them what they must do. Here he urges his hearers not to hinder what has been and is being done for them by another. We are reminded that the strength and success of the Christian lies not in his own efforts, but in the truth by which he is vitalized. The Christian is charged not to hinder that which is the power of his new life in Christ. This abiding truth is designated as that which he had heard from the beginning, which doubtless was the first simple message of the Gospel apprehended in its unity. Sometimes this message is defined as "the Word of Jesus," at other times as "the words of Jesus." We are to think here of the Gospel message as "the word of Jesus" which becomes in the individual a spiritual power transforming the whole man.

Mr. D. L. Moody has well said, "In our day one can hear much talk about growth in the Christian life. Well and good, if there is anything in the life that can grow. 'What a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' But if I planted my watch, dare I hope for a crop of watches? Why not? The watch is the product of the trained mind and skillful hand of man, but there is no germ of life in it that could germinate and bring forth fruit. Christ alone by His indwelling can bring forth fruit in our lives that is well pleasing to God."

But the abiding of the truth, the vitalizing principle, not only contributes life to the believer, but it at the same time affords spiritual fellowship with the Source of life. The presence of spiritual life in the soul carries with it the necessity of this heavenly communion. Life in Christ and fellowship with Christ are correlative facts. Jesus specifically promised that if one would abide in His word that such a one would certainly abide in His and the Father's love.

An old Scotch shepherd was nearing his end. A very kind-hearted neighbour came to see him, and was anxious to know the state of his mind. "Donald," said the friend, "have you a glimpse of His face now?" "Go away, man," said Donald, "I'll have none of your glimpses. I have had a full view of His blessed face these forty years—why should I be content with a glimpse?" And Donald was right.

bb. Eternal Duration. "*And this is the promise that he himself promised us, even the life eternal*" (2: 25).

"He himself" refers to Jesus, and there are many sayings of Jesus which embody this promise. One of the most direct is that message of comfort brought to the disquieted heart of Martha at the death of her brother, when He said: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." It is

significant that Jesus spoke both of the resurrection and the life. He wanted Martha not to mistake the full meaning of His words. Lazarus was dead. A resurrection was necessary in his case before there could be life. The life He refers to is the life on the other side of the grave. This life John classes as the eternal. If the Greek language is capable of expressing endless life that idea is given to us in these words of John—" the life, the eternal."

Above the triple doorways of the cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses and underneath is the legend, " All that which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other is sculptured a cross, with the words " All that which troubles is but for a moment." But over the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, " That only is important which is eternal."

Harry W. Jackson, in the following incident, gives us a very practical illustration of the Christian doctrine of eternal life: " In a beautiful valley in New Brunswick, I was visiting my people in a new charge. At the door of a lovely home, I was met by an elderly lady who said: ' Yes, my father would be glad if you would come up to see him. He cannot see you, nor hear you talk: he is a hundred and two years old. But when I have explained, I am sure he will appreciate your call.' I was taken up to his room, where I found the old

Christian bedridden. He could do nothing for himself but was waited on devotedly by his daughter. She shouted in his ear, 'Father, there's a Baptist minister come to see you.' The old man weighted down with years, and appearing already to have done with life, raised himself on his bed and said in clear, vibrant tones, 'I have everlasting life!' The words of the fine old Christian seemed to be echoed back from another world."

No one has more beautifully expressed this precious promise of eternal life than has Gordon Hurlbutt in the following lines:

They call me old—
They see my whitened hair,
My wrinkled face,
My toiling up the stair
With painful pace,
My deeply furrowed brow,
My shoulders stooped,
My thin hands, withered now,
Trembling and drooped.

But could they see the part
That lies within,
They'd find a youthful heart,
For nothing thin
And wrinkled, earthly born,
Would they see there,
But One as young as Morn
And far more fair.

His smile is light to me;
His touch divine
Anoints my eyes to see
All things are mine.
I scorn the thieving years,
The creeping cold:
Love keeps away all fears—
Love's never old!

What does it matter, then,
That I am gray;
That this frail frame has been
Seized by decay?
Though silver is my hair,
Sweet flowers of gold
Are blooming everywhere—
My heart's not old!

And so, this tenement
Of crumbling clay
Is a mere hut I rent
For one brief day:
Love's wondrous house in peace
Waits now for me,
With joys that shall increase
Eternally!

(2) A Recognition of the Fact (2: 26–29).

We come now to the last point made by the Apostle in his discussion of the spiritual conflict of believers, which we choose to call here a recognition of the fact over which the warfare was waged, namely, "the Word made flesh."

(a) The Divine Contribution (2: 26, 27).

In the apprehension of this vital, historic fact we are made to see the necessity of using both divine gifts and human graces.

aa. The Function of the Preacher. *"These things have I written to you concerning them that would lead you astray"* (2: 26).

"These things" refer to what was said in verses 18–25, where the author unfolded the true character and significance of the false teachers in their relation to the Christian body. Above these adversaries were described from the standpoint of their spiritual aspect, and were designated "Antichrists"; here the preacher speaks of them under their outward aspect, and labels them as those who would lead his audience away from the truth and from the fellowship of the Christian society. The efforts of these foes of the fact are said to be present and continuous—they were in the act of carrying out their purpose at the time of the writing of this booklet.

The function of the prophet and preacher is to declare the whole truth. We readily see that this is the duty of the holy men of old who wrote as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit, and it was under such an influence that John recorded these words. It was their task to disclose the false as well as to declare the true. In a limited way the

office of the preacher of all times is to condemn error and to commend truth. Usually it is a thankless job, but the salt of society is the cultured, courageous, conscientious, and consecrated preacher of the Book of God. He is needed in every age. There is a crying need of him now. I doubt if there was ever an age in the Christian era when the world was afflicted with more false teaching than this. What makes error so dangerous and damaging to-day is because it is presented with such shrewdness and deception, with such pomp and bravado. The headquarters of the false teachers and preachers of our time are our largest colleges and universities.

Twenty years ago, so far as I could ascertain, there was not a professor in Harvard college who believed in the deity of Jesus Christ. When I wrote a paper for one of my classes in the post-graduate department on "The Divinity of Christ," one of my classmates made this criticism on it: "The author takes for granted the historicity of the Gospel." That attitude was characteristic of the institution. You must get rid of the Bible, and especially the Gospel, if you are to get rid of Jesus Christ, and this is the chief purpose of those who explain everything as the product of a natural process, and who rule out the supernatural on the ground of impossibility. Unitarianism has spread rapidly since that day. Its most rapid strides seemingly have been made in recent years. This

may appear to be the case only because in certain centers advocates of this thought are becoming more and more pronounced.

Dr. T. T. Eaton, once editor of *The Western Recorder* and pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., is to be classed among those who, following in the wake of the Apostle John, spoke boldly in his day against the purpose and propaganda of false teachers, as well as to openly present Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the only Saviour of men from sin. Thirty-five years ago he expressed the conviction that Chicago University had set out with an avowed purpose to betray revealed Christianity. Through the intervening years this aim has become more and more evident. Judging from Dr. Case's recent book, that institution is ready to throw aside every mask of deception and to come out in the open against Jesus Christ, and to brand Christianity as a mere fable. It has been very evident for years that this and other colleges and seminaries were making serious attacks on the doctrine which John set out to defend in this manuscript, and if Christianity survives the storm, as I believe it will, it will be due in no small degree at least to the faith and fidelity of the messengers of the Bible.

bb. The Unction of the Paraclete. "*And as for you, the unction which ye received from him abideth in you, and ye have no*

need that any one teach you; but as his unction teacheth you all things (and it is true and is no lie), and even as it taught you, ye abide in him" (2: 27).

The group of believers is contrasted here with the school of false preachers. The pronoun "you" is set at the head of the sentence for this purpose. There is a great difference between the preacher's audience and the exponents of the gnostic heresy. The followers of Christ possessed something which was foreign to the nature of the adversaries of the doctrine of "the Word made flesh." The qualification which distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever, mentioned by John here, is the unction which the Christian received from Christ in the baptism of the spirit. "From him" refers to Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate or fundamental cause of the gift of the spirit. He made a specific promise of sending the Paraclete. When He ascended and was seated at the right hand of God the Father, the spirit descended at Pentecost and lighted upon the Apostolic Church. The Paraclete, therefore, becomes the immediate cause of this spiritual unction. This is the unction spoken of above, and by which the believer was enabled to know false teachers. Here as there, this unction was the fulfillment of the Old Testament ceremony both as to the oil and the act of anointing. It is stimulating to note that this anointing resides per-

manently in the Christian. We are made to see that the gifts of God are sure and certain on His part. And this unction, it is pointed out, is a sufficient criterion for truth. Christians of that day did not need any fresh teaching even from the Apostles, still less from those who professed to guide them into new depths. What the Apostle said to the saints of the first, he could with equal appropriateness say to those of the twentieth century—"And ye have no need that any one teach you."

The following words serve to establish the statement just made. John declares that his hearers are at present being taught all things by this divine unction, just as they were instructed by the spirit in all the mysteries of godliness at first. For added emphasis he affirms that this is true, that it is not a lie. He gives assurance, in closing, that the claim of the Gospel that all believers abide in Christ is a spiritual verity; that his present audience, along with all other children of God, can confidently rely upon their spiritual union and fellowship with their Saviour and Lord. This of course could not be so, if the gnostic heresy were true. And this contention cannot be so to-day, if the Unitarian doctrine is true. Abiding in Christ is an idle, foolish dream, if Jesus Christ is only a man. John intended that his people should know assuredly that they were united vitally to their Saviour, just as they were taught at first by the Paraclete, and just as they were being taught by

this same spirit at the time he was addressing them. It was his purpose that the faith of his flock in their Christian experiences of grace should not be shaken or destroyed by the false doctrines of the enemies of the Christian religion.

One hears a great deal from certain quarters about the superiority of the cogitations of the best minds even over the sayings of the scribes of Scripture. Some would have us believe that it is utter folly not to subscribe to the precepts of the modern wise men, and to make a scrap heap of the Bible, because it is full of superstition and contradictions. One does not have to read between the lines to know what John thought about the sufficiency of inspiration and revelation. He makes it clear that no new revelation is needed. He stated plainly that the instruction which was being given at that time to his hearers was not an addition to the first lesson the Paraclete taught them. When Jesus said, in speaking of the Spirit—" he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," He did not mean that the Spirit would give a new revelation. All spiritual truth in germ form is already revealed. Nothing is to be added to; nothing is to be subtracted from the manuscripts of God. The office of the Spirit is to unfold, to teach what is already written. He is the instructor of " the book nobody knows." We have enough to learn within the lids of the Bible.

A professor in one of our divinity schools some years ago made this statement: "God does not throw out the life line to any man; He teaches him how to swim." In debating the truthfulness of this assertion with a student of that school, I asked him what view he held relative to the significance of the death of Jesus. He said he held to the moral influence theory. I quoted from Paul and Peter, where they set forth a larger meaning to the cross of Calvary, but this young preacher rejoined: "Yes, I know that those Apostles teach the idea of the efficacy of the death of Christ, but my ideas are as good as theirs." When I reminded him that these men were inspired, he replied: "Yes, but they were no more inspired than I am inspired." It is very evident that the opinions of this young theologian were very much at variance with the ideas of John as to the scope and significance of inspiration, and the sufficiency and the authority of revelation. John claimed that the Spirit spoke for all ages regarding truth and the certainty of the Christian experience. He held that the Spirit's testimony regarding life in Christ was sufficient for the disciple of every age.

When the saintly Charles Stovel lay dying, after a long life of fruitful service for God and man, a friend who visited him asked whether the promises upon which he had rested so many years yielded him solid support and comfort in his dying hour. The old man answered somewhat gruffly, "I am

all right, if the signature is all right." He turned his face to the wall and remained silent for a few minutes, and then he added in a voice that rang with joy and confidence, "The signature is all right, and I am all right." In those few moments of silent prayer he was enabled to realize that all the promises of the Gospel are "yea and amen in Christ Jesus," endorsed by Him whose signature is the pledge and guarantee of their faithful fulfillment.

(b) The Human Coöperation (2: 28–29).

God's contribution to this conflict for truth is of inestimable value. Apart from the influence of the spirit and the power of the messages of prophet and preacher, this would be a one-sided battle. But divine help is not all that is needed to make this a successful warfare. The all-wise God and loving Father has assigned a task to every follower of the Nazarene. John sets down the duties of every believer in the last two verses of this chapter.

aa. Spiritual Habitation. *"And now, little children, abide in him, that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness and not shrink in shame from him at his presence"* (2: 28).

Above the writer has been dwelling upon the unchangeable gifts of God. He has assured his readers of their secure abode in Christ. Now he

turns to the practical, human side of this holy attainment. The Greek verb for "abide" above is looked upon more properly perhaps as being in the indicative mood. We have there a declaration of the fact of our union and fellowship with Christ. Here the verb, though the same in form, is better translated as an imperative. Believers are here enjoined to abide in Christ. There is something for the Christian to do in this mysterious and wonderful realization. By our supplication, by our meditation, by our determination, by our consecration we may play a small but very important part in the realization of this holy union. In short, we are to abide in Him by fulfilling the conditions under which He may exercise His power in us.

In writing about this rare, sacred Christian experience, it is not strange that the author begins with "little children," the appellation of affection, the term of tenderest appeal. After enjoining his churches to do their duty in this work of abiding in Christ, we are given the purpose of the charge. Believers are urged to play their part in this work of grace that they might have spiritual boldness and not shrink from the Lord Christ, when He comes to earth again. Unquestionably the Apostle is speaking here of the second advent. The word for "manifested" here is the same word used to describe the first manifestation of our Lord in the flesh. When the Lord shall come in great glory and power, men will have need of boldness, lest

they shrink away from Him with a feeling of guilt and unworthiness. When Jesus comes again it will not be as the Lamb to be slain, but as the Victor to gather up His spoils. He will come again, not as the servant of the race, but as the King of kings. It is not surprising that the modest, humble preacher identifies himself with his audience as he faces this great day of our Lord's triumph, and is conscious of the unworthiness of the best of men. All of us need to heed daily and hourly the admonition of our Lord when He said, in speaking of this day, " Be ye also ready."

A magnificent pearl necklace, belonging to the Empress of Germany, was once discovered to have lost all its beautiful sheen and colour through lack of use and want of light. The court jeweler tried in vain to clean it, but decided to return it to its native element. He enclosed the pearls in a bottle filled with airholes, through which the salt water could constantly flow, and sunk them beneath the waters of the Northern Ocean to be there fed again. Unless we feed upon Him who is the bread of life we will lose that beauty of character which the indwelling Christ imparts.

bb. Intellectual Observation. *" If ye know that he is righteous, know* [*notice*] *that every one that doeth righteousness hath been begotten of him"* (2: 29).

The pronoun " he " refers to Christ. In the

first verse of this chapter John addressed our Lord as Jesus Christ, "the righteous." We have here two different Greek verbs translated "know," though they are not identical in meaning. The first verb signifies absolute knowledge, knowledge we gain by intuition or inspiration; knowledge gained internally. The second verb has reference to that knowledge which one gains by observation, or which is gained externally. John says, "If you come to know personally or experimentally that Jesus is the Righteous One, observe, take notice that every one that doeth righteousness is born anew in Christ." If we come to know Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and as Saviour of men, we can apply this absolute personal knowledge of righteousness in Christ to human society and come to realize that every one who is practicing the principle of righteousness is a child of Christ. In saying "is begotten of him," instead of saying "has a new life in Christ," the emphasis is placed upon the source or author of the life rather than the life itself.

According to John there is but one kind of righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. According to John there is but one way that man can be righteous, and that is by being born in and through Jesus Christ. According to John every one that does righteousness is a child of God in Christ, and conversely every one that does not live a life of righteousness does not belong to the holy

family. To John this is universally true. This is a statement to be applied to every individual. A man is judged by the fruits of his life, and not by the professions he makes.

All colours are wrapped up in the sunlight, which, as is well known, may be seen resolved into its elementary colours in the prism or rainbow. Apart from the sunlight, no object has any colour, as is shown by the fact, that, as soon as light is withdrawn from the landscape, the colours fade from the robe of nature. Now Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,—the fair colour of every grace and Christian virtue. When Christ is shining upon the heart then these virtues are manifested there. But as no part of the landscape has any colour in the absence of the sun, nor can acquire any independently of the sun, so Christians have no grace except from Christ, nor hold any virtue independently of Him.

A Scotch minister was once preaching at Inverness, and was about to enter the pulpit, when word was brought to him that an aged Highlander, now eighty years of age, who had been converted at sixty, lay dying. Though there were only a few minutes to spare, he went over to see this man. Going to the house, he said to him, "I have just four minutes. Do you think you could tell me in that time how you were converted?" "Oh, yes," he replied, "I could tell you in two. When I was

sixty years of age, the Lord Jesus came along and said to me, 'Sandy, I'll exchange you.'" "Exchange, Sandy, and what did you give Him?" asked the minister. And Sandy replied: "I gave Him all my years of sin and my sinful heart, and He gave me in return His righteousness."

No one has more beautifully expressed the message of the Apostle in this verse than has Isaac Watts in the following familiar hymn:

No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done;
I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of Thy Son.

Now, for the love I bear His name,
What was my gain I count my loss;
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to His cross.

Yes, and I must and will esteem
All things but loss for Jesus' sake;
Oh may my soul be found in Him,
And of His righteousness partake!

The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before Thy throne;
But faith can answer Thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord has done.

III

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

ON the top of a hill outside the walls of ancient Jerusalem a great crowd had gathered to see three accused criminals crucified. One of those who were to be put to death was the religious reformer named Jesus, who had announced Himself to be the king of the Jews. For this reason, the eyes of that crowd were fixed on Jesus, the entire band of soldiers sat down and watched Him, and the passing throng reviled Him, wagging their heads, saying, " Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself; if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross." Jesus was thus mocked and reproached by the world, while completing for the world its redemption. Many unexplained freaks of nature attended the crucifixion of this religious leader. A thick darkness fell upon the whole earth; the veil of the temple was torn in two; all creation trembled; the rocks were rent from their places; the graves were opened and gave up their dead. Near by the cross stood the Roman centurion watching the King, and when he saw the earthquake and the things that were done, he was much afraid, and said: " Truly, God's Son was this one."

And yet, not every one seems able to accept the divinity of Christ as readily as did the centurion. For this reason we offer the following thoughts for consideration to those in doubt.

Since it is the custom of our courts of law to suffer no man to be condemned before he has made a statement for himself, it is but proper and fair that we ask, in opening this query, what Christ said of Himself. The world cannot form a thorough opinion of any person without first hearing the person's own testimony concerning himself.

In his little book, *The Nature of Goodness,* Dr. Palmer has said truly: " The knowledge that I am and I cannot be conveyed to me by another human being, nor can I perceive anything similar in him. Each must ascertain it for himself. Accordingly there is only one word in every language which is absolutely unique. That is the word I. Obviously, then, the meaning of this word cannot be taught. Everything else may be."

In other words, we would say, you may learn that Professor Palmer is an excellent teacher of ethics, and you may ascertain his ability as a scholar of language and history, but what the " Ego " of the man is no human being can know. So it is with Christ. No man could say what He was. He had to announce that Himself. Listen to some of His claims: " He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent him." I and my Father are one." " I am the way, the truth

and the life." "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." "Before Abraham was, I am." We see from these passages that Jesus taught that He was equal and pre-existent with the Father and that He was the only Saviour from sin. So distinct and unmistakable was His claim of equality with the Father, that the Jews began one day to stone Him, and on being asked for which of His good works they stoned Him, they said, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, maketh thyself God." Either Christ was or He was not sincere in teaching His divine origin, and it must be either true or false. There can be no middle ground with such bold and definite demands before us.

If these claims are true, and Christ knew that He was not the Son of God, what was His purpose in thus falsifying to men and blaspheming the name of Jehovah? What could He hope to gain by it? Was it wealth? He was poor from His youth. He had not where to lay His head, and at His death He had no goods which He could bequeath to His widowed mother. He could have been a king of wealth, if He had sought it, for He was the master of disease of the most dangerous kind, but He would have no pay for all His cures.

Did He seek the renown of intellectual ability and attainments? Nations would have sat at His

feet to drink in the world's best wisdom for people were saying: "Never man spake like this man." Doors were open to Him in every sphere of life, if He desired the gifts of earth. If the purpose of this God-man was unholy and to deceive men, explain, if you will, the intense longing of His heart; the plain and simple life that He chose to live; the trials and suffering that He patiently endured; and His tender and passionate love for a sinful race. Why the bloody sweat of the garden? Assign a reason for that prayer of the cross—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Name the cause of that plaintive cry over wicked Jerusalem. You cannot find a low and mean ambition in such evidences as these.

Was His intention to deceive the world and make men worship Him as God, and yet He did not follow the customary and most natural course of action? Why did He not take advantage of the opportunities of His day? There was never a riper time for one who aspired to the Jewish throne than then. Israel was living in hope of the coming Messiah and an early establishment of a temporal kingdom; and so intent were they in their desire that they would have crowned Jesus king of the nation on several occasions, by force, had He not stolen secretly away. He could have resorted to the use of the sword, as did Mohammed, to execute His plans and extend His kingdom, and every Jew would have died for the cause. Jesus was not a

Titus Oates, that infamous and unprincipled wretch that robed himself in an episcopal garb, called and had himself called the Christ. Who had people committed to prison at the point of his finger, from whom they fled as from a blast, and whose very breath was a pestilence. There is not to be found in all Christ's life and teaching a low ambition, a mean desire, or an unholy aspiration.

Was His claim to divinity due to mental weakness? Was He only deceived in thinking He was the Son of God? Do you say that it was due only to fanciful imagination of an ambitious fanatic? You must explain then the most difficult and unaccountable phenomenon, namely, the marvelous success of His life, that ever confronted the students of philosophy. With this theory before you, account for that masterful sermon on the mount; Christ's insight into human nature; His knowledge of things divine; His clear revelation of God, the Father, and the future state of the soul; and the wisdom He displayed in replying to those who sought to entrap Him, and in solving the most intricate problems of life that the simplest minds might take in His meaning. If you set up this low standard for Jesus Christ by which you propose to account for those things that attend His life, the world will shout into your ears, in the language of the men of His day, " Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? "

Let us go a step further and see if we cannot

find something in the inner life and character of Christ to support His divine claim. To be sure we are not able to understand every message that comes to us from the silent voices of His inner self, but we can catch enough of the glow of the marvelous symmetry and beauty of His life to give us to understand that there is a fathomless depth of hidden love, wisdom and bliss beyond. How are we to satisfy reason on the point of His purity of life, seen throughout His earthly mission? That He was holy and clean in every deed, word and thought, no one will dare deny. The fiercest battle in which Satan ever engaged was with the Son of Man. He was tempted at all points like as we are, yet without sin. The devil desired to sift Him as wheat, but on every hand he met with signal defeat. All the artillery of hell was turned loose upon Him, but unto the very end He remained the same loving, tender, and sinless Christ, and His dying breath was a prayer for the salvation of those that had caused His death. His sworn enemies used every means of finding some fault in Him, but do what and all they could, there was no true accusation brought against Him, and when He stood before Pilate on His trial of life, His enemies could only say, "He is worthy of death, for he blasphemeth the name of God." We are not left here to a general interpretation, for Christ gave a plain statement about the matter.

Hear the challenge that He flung into the ears

of His foes! "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Neither sacred nor profane history records such a boastful and superhuman defiance coming from the lips of any man before or since the day of the world's Messiah. No rational mind could venture such a challenge unless it were sinless. For an imposter to do so would be but to throw other barriers in his way, and to make success more difficult. Jesus made this high claim for Himself because He did not shrink from the most acute and minute examination; He rather sought it.

There are some who, though agreeing with us that Jesus is the best man the world ever knew, cannot ascribe to Him divinity. These face a problem which no scientist or theologian can solve. Was Jesus man, and only man and yet lived a sinless life in a sinful world? Then, in the name of all reason and justice, why have not other men lived upon such an exalted plane? Was His sinlessness due to any influence that was brought to bear upon His youth while He lived in Nazareth? If the soil of that small town grows such healthy plants, why are there none flourishing there today? It is not held by any class of scholars, deserving respect, that the moral phenomenon, seen in the life of Christ, can be explained with ordinary principles. If ordinary principles cannot account for this moral perfection, name the extraordinary.

This question is met by the suggestion that Jesus needed and received for the mission with which He was charged, special perfection from God—protection for His intellect, His conscience, and His heart; and not only protection, but extraordinary divine influence, in illuminations, in inspiration, in guidance, and in the nurture of the inner nature. Certainly, unusual gifts demand unusual sustenance; and it is obvious that God Almighty can withhold or bestow His own gifts; and He can bestow upon whomsoever and in whatever measure He pleaseth; but if Jesus was man, and only man, why has not God given the world other such men? We naturally and rightly expect that under similar conditions—much more under happier combination of circumstances—that God would accord a like protection and influence to men in every age. What God did do for one man, He certainly could do for other men. If He could, and would not, you are unable to explain this phenomenon, without doing great injury to the character of God, without impeaching His justice and holiness. Such partiality, shown in the bestowal of gifts, cannot be fairly charged against benevolent, good men, to say nothing of God.

If we will turn now to the work of Jesus, we shall discover there many facts that will help to substantiate our proposition. Effects can only grow from adequate causes. Great thoughts are not born in shallow brains. Wonderful achieve-

ments do not spring from common properties. Fine institutions are not established and buttressed by the world on nothing. These are not the results but of efforts commensurate with themselves. Here is Christianity. From whence is it? What is it? Christianity is embedded in more than nineteen centuries of history; it bears no mean record; it is the best of the race. "Buddhism and Brahminism are older, and are linked with more peoples. Mohammedanism, not so old, has to do with greater multitudes. The adherents of these systems have outnumbered the adherents of Christianity. Numerically they are in the lead. But if you weigh men, or weigh nations, there are no numbers of either that can be put in the scale against Christendom without kicking the beam." The religion of Christ is both aggressive and ennobling. It does not thrive amid moral abomination, neither does it clasp hands with superstition. It not only makes its way through the blackest of heathendom to the minds and consciences of nature's untutored sons, but it is fostered by the greatest intellects and embraced by the best hearts of the most highly civilized nations on the globe. It has been in the fiercest discussions and those that engaged the best thinkers since the day of the Galilean Prince, and still it lives, flourishing, and expanding to-day as never before in its history. Christianity is not fiction. It is no dream of an enthusiast, no mere conjecture, no concocted favour,

but a " fact, a palpable and undenied fact." There are other facts besides Christianity. All false systems of religion are facts, " perpetual and influential, too, but only over a stagnant and dead peoples." The history of the best nations, however, cannot be written without writing the history of Christianity. " It gave the world a new departure, and to history a new date—A. D. (Anno Domini)—the year of our Lord." What is that in our dates and superscriptions but the assent of the leading civilizations to the fact that with Christianity came a new era, from the beginning and progress of which, it cannot be separated. Other religions do not welcome light, neither can they bear it; while the more carefully we examine the work of the Church of Christ, richer and more glorious do her treasures appear. These systems of morals—often of immorality—are not worthy of a comparison with Christianity. They are often inconsistent with the most apparent laws of science, while Christianity frequently plays the part of a tutor, and leads the student of research to a clearer and holier light.

It is not only profitable to study the general work of Christ upon the world, but it will serve our purpose to look into some particular manifestations of His power. Jesus was a worker of miracles, and history knows none that equal them. He healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, cleansed the leprous, made the lame to walk, and raised the

dead to life. Nations looked upon His miracles in wonder and amazement. It was doubtless due to this demonstration of power, more than to His doctrine, that multitudes flocked after Him. So perfect was His grip upon humanity, through this expression of His strength, that His enemies in consternation said "What do we? For this man doeth many miracles." "Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him." Only holy men and prophets have wrought miracles, but these were all done with an acknowledged dependence and derived power. This was not true of Christ. He knew no weakness, He felt no lack of power. Hear Him when He speaks and mark the tone of authority.

Having rebuked the devil for his loud cries, Jesus said, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." Because Christ had said to the wicked man, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee," the Pharisees murmured against Him. Then it was that Jesus answered, "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said to the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." Jesus stood at the mouth of the sepulchre, and, the stone being removed, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." If He was merely human why such confidence in His own strength—strength to work wonders? This uneducated mechanic, we have noted already, challenged

the world upon His moral perfection and purity of character. We are now to bear in mind that He challenged the world also upon the nature and worth of His miracles. He said to the doubting Jews that asked to know if He were the Christ, the Son of God, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." This challenge is still before the enemies of our Lord and King to-day, and the world looks on and wonders, for "His touch hath still its ancient power."

Lastly, a strong argument in our favour can be called from the testimony of both friends and foes. What does the world think of Christ? Let us hear, first, some of the statements made by those that do not accept the supernatural origin of Christ.

Strauss, who summarily rejects all miracles and prophecies as simply impossible, nevertheless says of Jesus: "He remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought, and no perfect piety is possible without His presence in the heart."

Rosseau, in the same confession where he speaks of the Gospel as "full of incredible things," "repugnant to reason," says, "Is it possible that a book at once so simple and so sublime should be the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage whose history it contains should be himself a mere man? Where is the man, where is the philosopher, who could live and die without weakness and without ostentation? If the life and

death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God."

And Renan, repudiating the supernatural in the recorded life of Jesus, and compelled in the repudiation to speak of Christ as acting on "false views," with much "self-deception," a miracle worker and exorcist in spite of himself, and only for the purpose of innocent fraud, nevertheless says of Jesus: "He founded the pure worship, of no age or no clime, which shall be that of all lofty souls to the end of time." "Repose now in Thy glory, noble founder! Thy work is finished. Thy divinity is established."

What does all this mean? Are these the enemies of Jesus that have been speaking thus? Can it be so? Recall if you please, some of the utterances. "If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God." "Repose now in Thy glory, noble founder! Thy work is finished. Thy divinity is established." Is Jesus man, and only man, and yet these utterances are drawn from the mouths of His foes? Whence have all logic and reason flown that men can hold to such contradiction of ideas?

If we can gather such support from Christ's opponents, what may we expect when we listen to the confession of His followers?

Shakespeare, the master poet, at whose poetic shrine the peoples of the cultured nations bow, once

said: "I commend my soul into the hands of my God, my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, to be made partaker of the life everlasting."

Dr. Tupper, a prominent clergyman of Denver, Colorado, wrote William Ewart Gladstone, asking him for a statement concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ. This was his reply: "All that I think, all that I hope, all that I wrote, all that I live for, is based upon the divinity of Jesus Christ."

In short, there are wise and noble sons from the cold North, to the Sunny South, from the jungles of benighted India, to the plains of civilization's best culture; from the most unlearned, to the giant thinkers of our time; there are thousands of these that are gladly speaking to-day, and saying with the Apostle Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And I cannot think that it is begging the question to claim that these have the right to speak and that their testimony outweighs all other, for they not only know about Christ, but they know Him, whom to know is life eternal. Their knowledge is not only theoretical, but practical as well. We may question Mr. Gladstone's ability as a logician, his right to true statesmanship, his position as a scholar, his power as an orator, but only God Almighty, the Omniscient One, can know the secrets of his inner life and the experiences of his inmost soul. Here, man must

stand still and learn, and not presume to sit in judgment on the spiritual experience of his fellow-mortal.

After what we have said and all that can be said, the question remains a personal one, which each individual must solve for himself and before his God. This cannot be done by reason alone, for faith must play a large part. Like all those consecrated souls that are living God most perfectly before the world, let us join the poet, and sing:

> *" Strong Son of God, immortal love,*
> *Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,*
> *By faith, and faith alone, embrace,*
> *Believing where we cannot prove."*

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